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THE OEDIPUS TYRANNUS
OF
SOPHOCLES

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THE OEDIPUS TYRANNUS
OF
SOPHOCLES

TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

BY

J. T. SHEPPARD, M.A.
FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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To

C. F. T.

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A frail thing is this Intelligence, spread through our bodies, and many are the shocks calamitous that dim our thoughts. A little span of life that is not life men look upon, and then, so swift are they to perish, like a smoke they are carried off, and lo! they have flown away: and nothing have they learnt to know save that which each has happened on, as all are driven all ways. Yet every man makes his vain boast that he has discovered the All —though that cannot be seen of men nor heard nor comprehended.

You, then, since you also have travelled hither, shall learn no more than mortal wits can see.

EMPEDOCLES.

Wise was the Lacedaemonian Cheilon who wrote these words:—In nothing seek excess: only to the Just Measure belongeth every good.

AUCTOR INCERTUS.

Quietness is a charming lady. And she dwells near Modesty of Mind.

EPICHARMUS.

PREFACE

SOME years ago, in writing a short introduction to Greek tragedy, I ventured to say that 'the *Oedipus Tyrannus* depends for its effect upon qualities which are apparent, even in translation, to all readers who care for poetry and drama.' Soon after I had written thus boldly, I was fortunate enough to see Professor Murray's translation produced by Reinhardt. That performance taught me that the strength of the plot makes the play great and exciting even in the worst conditions that a bad producer can invent. But it also showed how little the real greatness of the play is appreciated even by scholars and artists: for many of them praised that unhappy production. The Sophoclean *Oedipus* depends for its finest effects upon the restraint of the performance: Reinhardt's production was lavish, barbaric, turbulent. The Greek actor was masked and stately: the words are so composed that their full effect can be appreciated only through the clear and rhythmical enunciation of an actor who relies mainly on his voice. Reinhardt's actors, not altogether, I suspect, of their own free will, raged and fumed and ranted, rushing hither and thither with a violence of gesticulation which, in spite of all their effort, was eclipsed and rendered insignificant by the yet more violent rushes, screams, and contortions of a quite gratuitous crowd. The tragedy was intended to be enacted in broad daylight, and the background should have been a pleasant palace. Nature should be cheerful and splendid at the beginning and until the end, indifferent to the sufferings of mortals, even as the lord of light, Apollo, himself. Reinhardt gave us for a palace a black cavern of mystery, for the sunshine the great arc lamps which spluttered as they followed the actors in their mad career, and, to add to our discomfort, he posted his assistants behind, above, and around the stage and audience, to utter meaningless yells and to clash strange cymbals and other instruments of brazen music. The appeal was to our senses. Imagination and the tragic emotion were left, so far as the greatness of the drama

allowed, unmoved. Finally, I am compelled to add, the dialogue of the *Oedipus* is clear-cut, unmetaphorical, and, though fraught with double meaning, never vague. The verse of Professor Murray, though beautiful and vigorous, is highly charged with metaphor, and very often vague. Sophocles had good reason for avoiding ornament. The mind of the speaker is always felt at work behind the words; and the words move us precisely because our imagination is stirred to realise the accumulating emotion which lies behind the clear and logical simplicity. Then, in strong contrast with the dialogue, the chorus supervenes, full of metaphor, rich in the direct and musical expression of emotion. The chorus, in its place, and at the right time, fills the atmosphere with the mysterious voices of oracles and of vague foreboding. Try to make the dialogue romantic, and you miss the effect of the chorus as well as of the dialogue itself.

So much I learnt from Reinhardt's performance. I learnt more from a later performance, in Greek, at Cambridge. The rehearsals gave me the opportunity of hearing every verse intelligently recited many times. That taught me that there is no pointless phrase in the play. Often a sentence, to which at first the actor despaired of giving a dramatic meaning, proved, in the end, to be highly charged with emotion. The purpose of my translation is to give the reader a faithful version, which, at least, adds nothing, though, of course, at every moment I am aware that I omit half the effect. I shall be content if I can give, by my failure, the clue which may enable English readers to see by what sort of method Sophocles succeeded. Professor Murray's translation has qualities of poetry to which mine can make no pretension, but I hope that through my version, if it be read in the light of my commentary, the reader will be helped to see more clearly the qualities of Sophocles.

Finally I witnessed the performance of M. Mounet-Sully[1] in Paris, the proof that the French nation possesses Sophocles, as at present the English nation, unfortunately, does not. The verse, the production, the acting, are beautiful: and it was the destruction of formal beauty that made Reinhardt's performance so lamentable. Because of its formal beauty the French production is an inspiration to all who care for drama, and a proof that Greek

[1] These sentences were written before the death of the great actor.

drama, not bolstered up by sensationalism, and not watered with sentimentality, has power to hold and to move a modern audience. If you doubt whether in these days Greek tragedy still matters, you may learn the answer in Paris.

The accuracy of my interpretation depends, of course, upon many minute points of textual criticism and grammar. On these matters I have not, I hope, formed my opinion without due consideration of the available evidence. Where I accept Jebb's text, I print it without critical comment. Where I disagree, my reasons are briefly stated in the notes. The questions with which I am mainly concerned cannot, indeed, be answered without a sound linguistic method, but are often ignored by scholars, and certainly cannot be answered by any critic who is content to say, with the famous schoolmaster: 'Boys, you are to have the privilege of reading the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, a storehouse of grammatical peculiarities.' In my introduction and commentary I have tried to apply the results of the linguistic study to the dramatic interpretation of the play. My method is the study of the normal Greek ideas, and in this respect my debt to Walter Headlam's work on Aeschylus will be apparent. I hope to prove that Sophocles, by playing on a set of simple and familiar notions, has created in the *Oedipus* a poem whose meaning is not disputable and a drama in which every part contributes to the tragic beauty of the whole.

For, although scholars agree in praising the *Oedipus*, they differ strangely about its merits and its purpose. In every generation there are found some champions of what I may call a 'moral' interpretation, who think that Sophocles composed his play, as Aeschylus certainly composed his trilogies, 'to justify the ways of God to man.' These critics imagine that our play presents an extreme example of 'Tragic Justice.' Oedipus sinned and was duly punished, and the audience are indirectly warned: 'Sin not, since the sin of Oedipus was so terribly requited.' With that school of criticism I have little sympathy, but I think the refutation offered by most scholars is inadequate. An appeal to plain good sense can always be eluded by the suggestion that, perhaps, after all, the moral point of view of Sophocles was different from ours: perhaps to him and to his audience, steeped in superstition, Oedipus *seemed* guilty and the play *seemed* a

triumphant vindication of the divine vengeance upon sin. We can only silence such absurdities by showing, in regard to each detail of the play, what effect it must have had on an Athenian audience, not merely what effect it has on a modern reader. This can only be accomplished if we consent to study the normal Greek ideas involved; and the study of these ideas has been neglected by the best of the linguistic scholars.

The champions of common sense have also, for the most part, underestimated the importance of the chorus. In particular, they tend to treat as irrelevant the famous ode which describes the growth of a 'tyrant' (863 ff.), a poem which those who find 'tragic justice' in the play regard as the very centre of its teaching, and as the final proof that Sophocles looked at this question of moral responsibility from an ancient, and a barbaric, standpoint[1]. The more enlightened critics reply that the chorus is irrelevant to the drama. 'No criticism in the world,' they say, 'can make line 889 apply to Oedipus[2].' And so, they say, the ode 'though impressive, and suited to the general atmosphere, is an irrelevant poem,' 'a beautiful embolimon[3].' Such an assertion plays into the enemy's hands. Aristotle, who is constantly thinking of the *Oedipus* as he writes his *Poetic*, must have been strangely forgetful when he declared that the chorus 'should take the part of an actor in the drama, in the manner of Sophocles, not in that of Euripides,' and added that 'Agathon was the first to introduce irrelevant interludes.' Still, in spite of Aristotle, the critics make the poem irrelevant. It is 'an indictment of contemporary Athenian tendencies.' Indeed, some have sought, for the particular political events to which Sophocles is irrelevantly referring, an obscure scandal connected with the treasures of Delphi, the famous mutilation of the Hermae, and so forth[4]!

So long as critics do not expound the normal Greek ideas and so long as they treat the choral odes as irrelevant, they must not be surprised at the constant revival of the heresy which makes our play a drama of sin and punishment. The truth is

[1] See (*e.g.*) S. Sudhaus *König Ödipus' Schuld*, Kiel 1912.

[2] So Bruhn p. 36 of his Introduction to the 11th edition of Schneidewin-Nauck (1910).

[3] This phrase is used by Dr H. F. Müller in an excellent article (*Berliner Phil. Wochenschrift* 1913 pp. 513 ff.) in which he conclusively disposes of the theory of Sudhaus.

[4] See, for this kind of criticism, Bruhn's Introduction p. 37.

that the ode in question plays upon a perfectly familiar set of ancient ideas; so far is it from being irrelevant, that every word has reference to Oedipus. It expresses, not indeed the opinion of Sophocles, but the fear of the chorus, as felt at the precise moment which the drama has reached, that Oedipus may after all be a bad man, deserving evil. The chorus is mistaken. Oedipus is a good man, and here lies the greatness of his tragedy. He suffers as a bad man should suffer, and his qualities and defects are such as to suggest to some minds, at some moments—though not in the latter scenes of the play—that he may really be a villain. In fact he is noble, and suffers in spite of his nobility, partly as a result of it. Exactly how all that is plain to a Greek audience, exactly how the chorus is relevant and how the details of the drama lead up to the chorus and yet refute it, I shall try to show.

Incidentally I hope to be able to show the dramatic value of those parts of the play for which most critics find it necessary to apologise. The Creon scene, 'the only part of the play,' as Professor Murray writes, 'which could possibly be said to flag,' even Creon's frigid argument which has disappointed and puzzled most of us, is for a Greek a vital and essential part of the tragic development. The choral odes, as generally misinterpreted, 'move their wings less boldly' than those of Euripides. I shall try to show their place in the economy of the drama. They are important, though they do not, as in Aeschylus, contain the central thought of the play. We shall find, I hope, a satisfactory answer to the much debated question of the 'sin' of Oedipus. Finally, I hope that we shall be able to dispose of the common criticism of the end of the play, criticism which really implies that Sophocles has failed. Wilamowitz, for instance, finds the last scenes so painful as to be for a modern audience intolerable: he thinks that Sophocles regarded them with complacence because, unlike us, he was a pious pagan[1]. Professor Murray thinks that if the final scenes were acted 'for all they are worth,' they would send the audience away 'cursing the author and producer, and wishing they had never come[2].' If we ask what were the preconceived notions

[1] *Ödipus* pp. 12 ff.

[2] In an interesting notice of the Cambridge performance published in the *Cambridge Review*, December 1912.

with which a Greek audience listened to each sentence, we shall find a new relevance in the Creon scene, and in the choral odes; we shall better understand the noble but imperfect character of the hero; and we shall see a new, though tragic, beauty, transforming the very painfulness into an artistic satisfaction, in the conclusion. We shall find, also, and this is most important—because, were it otherwise, we should have proved that Greek tragedy was indeed of little importance to modern readers—that the notions with which Sophocles and his audience approach the play are, in spite of some admixture of superstition, fundamentally true.

EDITORIAL NOTE

In publishing this book, which was begun before the war and finished in the early months of 1915, the author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to Mr C. F. Taylor, who generously undertook the task of verifying references and preparing the manuscript for the press, at a time when the author was unavoidably prevented from attending to such work. In general, to Mr Taylor's encouragement and criticism he owes more than any phrase of acknowledgment can indicate.

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The long delay in publication has been due to circumstances connected with the war.

J. T. S.

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.
February 1920.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE PREPARATION OF THE AUDIENCE

It is a mistake to begin the study of a drama by piecing together from the hints of the dialogue a laborious reconstruction of the incidents assumed by the author as antecedents of the action. Yet that is the usual introduction to editions of the *Oedipus*. We are expected by the critics to carry in our heads a very complicated story. The audience of Sophocles knew the main outlines of the hero's tragedy, and some of them knew—and knew well—the details of earlier presentations, in narrative and in drama, of that tragedy: but none of them knew how Sophocles would develop and modify the familiar theme. Knowing that an *Oedipus* was to be produced, they knew, through epic, lyric, and drama, as well as through the tales of strange old days which they had learnt from parents and nurses in their childhood, a story something like this. In ancient times, Laïus was king of Thebes. For some reason, he was destined to be slain by his own son. Apollo's oracle of Delphi warned him, forbidding him, some say, to beget a son, merely revealing to him, say others, the fate which he could not escape. Anyhow, a child was born, and Laïus, thinking to avoid the possibility of death at his hands, exposed the baby to die. Of course, the child was saved, grew to manhood without knowledge of his parentage, and in due time, without knowledge, met his father and, in a quarrel, slew him. But worse than this, according to the poets, was reserved for Oedipus. He came, unknown and ignorant, to Thebes, the city of his birth, and rid his countrymen of the ravages of a pestilent monster called the Sphinx. For this exploit he was rewarded with the hand of the king's widow, and with the throne of Thebes. Sooner or later the truth came to light. He learnt that he had murdered his own father and married his own mother.

With this main outline of the story the whole audience, we must assume, is familiar. Many, perhaps most, of the spectators are familiar also with the details of different versions, which for us are in part made known by allusions in Homer, Pindar or later writers, in part irrevocably lost. We are reminded, for instance, by an allusion in the *Odyssey*[1] that the legend took its familiar shape before the deepening religious sense of Greece—connected partly with the development of the worship of Apollo at Delphi —had made it seem intolerable that Oedipus should continue, after such a tragedy, to reign at Thebes. When Odysseus visited the land of the dead, he saw, we are told, the mother of Oedipus, 'the beautiful Epicaste, who did a great wrong in the ignorance of her heart, for she married her own son: and he, when he married her, had slain his own father. Then suddenly[2] the gods brought these things to light among men. So Oedipus reigned on over the Kadmeians in lovely Thebes, suffering anguish because of the dreadful counsels of the gods. But she fastened on high a noose from the lofty roof-beam of the hall, and so passed to the house of Hades, that strong gaoler: thus did her agony prevail upon her: and for him she left behind sufferings full many, yea, all that a mother's avenging Furies bring to pass.' This ancient version has, in some respects, a remarkable likeness to the account of Sophocles. The epic poet has seized, like Sophocles, the tragic significance of the moment of discovery. In Sophocles, moreover, when Jocasta passes swiftly and silently into the palace where she is presently to be found hanging in her bridal-chamber, the emotion is made more poignant by a touch of reminiscence which is surely not accidental[3]. But in Sophocles, although the gods are felt in the background as mysteriously potent, the anguish comes, not simply 'because of the dreadful counsels of the gods,' but as the result of a perfectly normal human process of enquiry. The hero himself unravels his own tragic secret. And in Sophocles, though Jocasta leaves indeed much suffering behind, she calls upon no Furies to avenge her. The ban which is upon Oedipus

[1] *Od.* XI 271 ff.

[2] It is uncertain, as Jebb remarks, whether ἆφαρ means 'presently' or 'suddenly.'

[3] See line 1072 τί ποτε βέβηκεν...ὑπ' ἀγρίας ἅξασα λύπης ἡ γυνή. And then δέδοικα μὴ...ἀναρρήξει κακά. The words in the *Odyssey* XI 277 ff. are these: ἡ δ' ἔβη...ᾧ ἄχεϊ σχομένη τῷ δ' ἄλγεα κάλλιπ' ὀπίσσω....This reminiscence adds also to the effect of lines 1280–1281.

is the more terrible because in his ignorance he has invoked it on himself[1]. In the light of such reminiscences and such contrasts we are entitled to assert that for an audience of Athenians, familiar, as we cannot be familiar, with the epic tradition, there must have been an element of pleasure which for us is irrevocably lost. The bare fact that in the lost epic known to the ancients as the *Cyprian Lays* the story of Oedipus was related in a digression[2] does not help us to appreciate the art of Sophocles. Nor are we much the wiser for the statement that in the lost *Oedipodeia* the wife of Oedipus and the mother of his children was called Euryganeia[3]. It is more interesting to learn that our scanty evidence vouches, at any rate, for the importance in the *Oedipodeia* both of Creon, the queen's brother, and of the devastating Sphinx. Whether the famous riddle which was triumphantly solved by Oedipus has actually reached us in the form in which it was asked in the epic[4], the evidence does not, I think, permit us to say. It was, at any rate, known in its present form long before Sophocles wrote his play[5], and has, I think, a peculiar appropriateness which has not been fully appreciated. I will attempt a version:

A thing there is whose voice is one;
Whose feet are two and four and three.
So mutable a thing is none
That moves in earth or sky or sea.
When on most feet this thing doth go
Its strength is weakest and its pace most slow!

The creature, of course, is man. When we are strong we use our legs: when we are old, we add a stick to our natural supports: when we are infants, and at our weakest, we crawl on all fours. The riddle is a humorous modification of the Delphic γνῶθι σεαυτόν. By answering it, Oedipus showed that he recognised himself in the riddle. In our play he is to unravel a fresh secret, and again, but in tragic fashion, he will come to 'know himself.' Finally the lesson which, through his tragedy, we are to learn, is

[1] See lines 819 ff., 1381 ff. Cf. Robert *Oidipus* p. 112. [2] See Jebb p. xiv.

[3] I agree with Robert *Oidipus* pp. 108 ff. that the suggestion which makes Euryganeia a second wife, married by Oedipus after the death of the wife-mother, is due to a late and stupid misunderstanding.

[4] This is the conjecture of Robert *Oidipus* p. 56 f.

[5] The letters και τρι on a vase painting of the early fifth century (Hartwig *Meisterschalen* Taf. lxxvii, Robert p. 51, Miss Harrison *Prolegomena* p. 208) make this at least highly probable.

this same lesson in its highest form: Learn that thou art but man, and, being man, be modest in thine own conceit and in desire.

Of the *Thebais*, so far as concerns the subject of our drama, we know even less than of the *Oedipodeia*. Its influence upon Aeschylus is undoubted, and, if good fortune restored it to our hands, we should probably find that fresh light would be thrown on Sophocles. That Teiresias played an important part in the epic versions we may, on *a priori* grounds, be allowed to assume. The modifications which were introduced into the story by the influence of Delphi we cannot trace, but Pindar's reference to Oedipus as an illustration of his favourite doctrine of the mutability of human fortune serves to remind us that to some poets, at any rate, before Sophocles Oedipus was primarily not so much a sinner as a man uplifted to great happiness only to be plunged into yet greater calamity; and Pindar's mention of the oracle delivered by the Pythian god reminds us that the importance of Apollo in the story was not due to the invention either of Aeschylus or of Sophocles. For the most part we are obliged to confess our ignorance. All we can do is to remember, and to regret, that we have lost the key to many pleasant allusions which were certainly meant to be felt[1].

Our most serious loss, however, is probably that of the trilogy in which Aeschylus, the great dramatist of the generation before Sophocles, had presented to an Athenian audience the tragic legend of Thebes. How serious is that loss we can guess when we have studied the *Electra* of Sophocles in the light of the *Choephoroe* of Aeschylus. In phrase after phrase of that play we recognise the *motifs* of the *Oresteia*, subtly modified and turned to new dramatic purpose with an effect which is doubly delightful to the hearer who knows the earlier play. How well the Athenian audience knew the dramatists, and how keenly they appreciated the subtlest reminiscences we can judge from the number and the delicacy of the allusions in Aristophanes, notably in the *Frogs*. If we possessed the *Oedipus* of Aeschylus, we should find it very different in construction, style, and purpose, from the *Oedipus* of

[1] The origin and early history of the myth I do not discuss. Modern theories are based on inadequate evidence and very bold hypotheses. Even if they could be proved, they would be irrelevant here unless it could be established that they were known to Athenians of the time of Sophocles. For this reason I have nothing to say about 'medicine-kings,' vegetation-spirits, marriage with the earth-mother.

Sophocles: but we should also find that the emotional value of many passages in our tragedy is heightened by the reminiscence of some Aeschylean *motif* or by an implied contrast with some Aeschylean suggestion. Of this we are made certain by the fact that in composing his *Oedipus* Sophocles has remembered, and has assumed that the audience will remember, *motifs* and suggestions from the *Septem contra Thebas*. From this, the third, and only surviving play of the Aeschylean trilogy, we must, in our turn, try to derive some help in our attempt to understand the method of Sophocles.

Aeschylus treats the whole story as a tale of guilt and retribution. Laïus sinned against Apollo, who forbade him to beget a son. In Sophocles we notice that it is left doubtful whether even Laïus sinned against the god. Nothing that Sophocles says makes it impossible that Apollo simply foretold the future destiny of a child already begotten. I agree with those critics who think that this vagueness is intentional, and that it ought to save us from a notion that somehow the fate of Oedipus is due to inherited guilt. In Aeschylus the child was born in sin, begotten in defiance of Apollo. The first play of the Aeschylean trilogy was concerned, then, with this sin of Laïus, and with its punishment which was death. In the second play, Oedipus, the son who has killed his father—probably in a moment of sinful anger—and has married his mother 'in madness,' at length discovers the truth. The second play, therefore, involves the sin and ruin of Oedipus and through him of Jocasta: but the catastrophe is to engulf the whole family, and Oedipus invokes a curse upon his sons[1]. The third play, which alone we possess, is concerned with the fulfilment of this curse. At the third stage, the ancient sin involves not only the sons of Oedipus, doomed to 'divide their inheritance with the sword,' slaying each other in a contest for the throne, but also the whole city of Thebes, besieged by the Argives, and only saved from conquest and destruction by Apollo himself. Thus there is a progressive development. First Laïus sins and is ruined. Then Oedipus ruins himself and his family. Finally the agony of the family of Oedipus imperils the whole city of Thebes.

[1] Robert's theory (*Oidipus* Chapter VI a) that the *ἀναγνώρισις* was not dramatised, but took place after the end of the first and before the beginning of the second play, seems to me highly improbable.

At the outset of the *Seven against Thebes*, Eteocles is presented as the generous and pious prince, encouraging his citizens to resist the impious invaders brought against their country by his brother, the ambitious Polyneices. At first Eteocles is the good king, not without defects, but generally noble. After the quiet dignity of his opening address to the citizens, an irruption of panic-stricken women brings to our imagination all that the siege and danger of the city mean. This panic is also used by the poet as the first important test of the character of the young king. He begins by attempting to dismiss the women with tyrannical threats, treating their prayers to heaven with an impious contempt. Presently he recovers his balance, and for the moment seems again to be safe because he is pious.

All this is not, indeed, consciously recalled by the spectator of the *Oedipus*. But there is a fundamental similarity of conception in the opening scenes, not altogether accidental[1]. Oedipus, like Eteocles, is presented to us as a king whose city is in peril—from plague, however, not from human enemies. Like Eteocles he appeals for courage, and, in his appeal, betrays his royal character. Here also we first receive our impression of the essential nobility of the hero and also of his danger—his unchecked power, his tendency to self-confidence. Then, and not till then, in the *Oedipus* as in the *Septem*, our imagination is fired by the excitement of a choral ode[2]. This time the chorus represent the city of Thebes praying for deliverance from the plague. Reinhardt's realistic method of presenting the first scene, the supplication to Oedipus and the king's response, stirred us with sympathy for the suffering city. But it dwarfed the figure of Oedipus, and spoilt entirely the superb imaginative appeal of the second appearance of the king. After the first quiet movement, we ought to get a second and

[1] In the *Antigone*, also, this Aeschylean scene is recalled. Creon, installed in the same fatal seat of authority at Thebes, himself in his turn addresses to his people words which are superficially pious but fundamentally tyrannical and arrogant, revealing the character which is to lead him also to wickedness and ruin. The threat of death by stoning *Ant.* 36, which is quietly dropped in the course of the play, recalls the threat of Eteocles *Sept.* 199.

[2] Later in the play, though I do not here suggest a deliberate reminiscence, the scene in which, after Creon's oath of innocence, the queen and the chorus, in short bursts of lyric with iambic interludes, prevail upon Oedipus to let Creon go, is similar in effect to the scene in which the chorus of the *Septem* restore Eteocles to a pious and balanced frame of mind.

more intense impression of the greatness and the peril of the hero, when, upon the passionate dances and the lyrical prayers for deliverance of the city, Oedipus supervenes with his too confident appeal:

> You pray? Well...do as I bid you, and you may be saved.

Elsewhere I have discussed the plot of the *Septem contra Thebas*[1], and have tried to show how important it is, from the dramatic point of view, to realise that the moderation of the king's *words* is itself the pledge of the salvation of his city. It also heightens the tragedy for the audience, who know that, in spite of his effort to be sane and moderate, at the final test—the challenge of his brother—the passionate nature of Eteocles will break loose and ruin him. The notion that it is actually dangerous to speak other than 'moderate and timely' words is essential to the understanding of most Greek tragedy. 'The helmsman of the state, the watcher who orders the act, must speak'—as well as do —'things right and seasonable (*τὰ καίρια*).' That theme governs the whole economy of the *Septem*. In the *Oedipus* the same principle is of vital importance. When Oedipus speaks, the audience listen with an instinctive readiness to appreciate the well-omened words and the ill-omened, the words of pride and self-confidence, the safe and pious words of cautious modesty. That fact adds for a Greek audience to the tremendous effect of the 'tragic irony' which even we appreciate, who have no such sense as had the Greeks of the mysterious connection of words and things. Remember how Teiresias insists *ὁρῶ γὰρ οὐδὲ σοὶ τὸ σὸν φώνημ' ἰὸν πρὸς καιρόν*, and how Creon, at the solemn close recalls the theme:—*ἃ μὴ φρονῶ γὰρ οὐ φιλῶ λέγειν μάτην*.

Finally, just before his catastrophe, Eteocles, casting all caution to the winds, becomes an impious fatalist, and rushes to his crime and death with a cry of self-abandonment which is surely remembered in the *Oedipus* when the king insists on tearing the last veil from the truth[2]. Oedipus is right to insist. If he tried to avoid the truth Apollo would duly bring it to light[3]. But the spirit of confidence and rashness which has seized the king is evil. And

[1] In the *Class. Quarterly* vol. VII pp. 73 ff. Wilamowitz *Interpretationen* p. 67 says that the *only* tragic scene of the play is that of the departure of Eteocles.

[2] See line 1076.

[3] See line 341.

the character of Oedipus in Sophocles recalls the character of Eteocles in Aeschylus.

I hope that this attempt to show how Sophocles has modified the Aeschylean themes will not be misunderstood. I do not suggest that for Sophocles the hero is ruined by his excessive confidence, punished for his boldness of speech. On the contrary, Sophocles has been at pains to make the hero innocent: and, since the tragic truth was true before the play began, had Oedipus been as reasonable as Creon and as modest as the chorus, the tragic result would, in Apollo's own time, have come to light. My point is simply this: the familiarity of the audience with plays in which a sinner's merited doom is foreshadowed or even produced by his wicked pride and confidence makes more poignant the tragedy of this innocent good man who behaves sometimes in the manner of the sinner who is justly ruined. The themes and *motifs* of Aeschylus are thus recalled with dramatic effect, but the moral inference is not drawn either by the poet or by the audience. It is for this reason that sometimes Sophocles has been hastily condemned as 'a great artist' but 'somewhat lacking in moral perception'! I hope to show the futility of such a criticism, but I have no wish to deny the contrast in moral tone upon which it is based. In spite of all reminiscences, the *Oedipus* of Sophocles differs from the Aeschylean trilogy as the *Electra* of Sophocles differs from the *Oresteia*. In the Aeschylean *Oresteia* it is the moral problem that holds us—the righteousness, and yet the terrible unrighteousness, of the matricide. In the *Electra* we are very little concerned with the justification of Orestes. Does that mean that Sophocles is 'morally obtuse'? I think not. In the *Electra* we are given something different, but not less tragic, the imaginative truth about Electra. It is tragic, terrible, that the heroine's love for her father has killed in her all other love, so that to her the murder of her mother is only the first glorious step in vengeance upon her father's enemies. The coldness of Electra to her sister, the bitterness of her hate for Clytaemnestra, and the vindictiveness of her triumph over the usurping adulterer, Aegisthus, are the tragic results of her love for Agamemnon. That love is revealed to us as the source, also, of a wonderful tenderness, when, in the happy moment of the return from death to life of Orestes, her father's representative, Electra suddenly

ceases to be cold and rational and cunning, and becomes an impulsive, reckless, almost hysterical girl. If, as I think, Sophocles has made us feel throughout the play this passionate love, with its results in beauty and in terrible ugliness, we have no right to criticise him for ignoring the moral problem which was the theme of Aeschylus[1].

Similarly in the matter of Oedipus, I hope that a recognition of the difference between the moralising of Aeschylus and the tragic irony of Sophocles will not be thought to justify a disparagement of the moral insight of the later poet. In the trilogy, of which the *Septem* formed a part, there can be little doubt that the sin of the heroes was the central fact. When Eteocles is ruined, the chorus sing:

> Of old it was engendered
> The Sin whose wage we see,
> The bloody ransom rendered
> By generations three!
> Laïus, though thrice the god had spoken,
> Apollo, from the central shrine of earth:
> 'Wouldst keep thy city's weal unbroken?
> See that no child from thee have birth!'
> Fool, in the god's despite,
> Fool, and slave of a fell delight,
> He got him a son—a son? It was Death that he got,
> Oedipus, parricide!
> Oedipus, mated by madness to sow a forbidden plot—
> His mother his bride.

Nothing of that kind will be found in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles. Here Oedipus does not suffer for his sin. He is innocent. Yet Sophocles has in view the character, the passion and the overconfidence, which in Aeschylus ruin Eteocles—and, we may conjecture, Oedipus as well. These characteristics move us because they make the hero, who is nobler than we are, like us, also, in the frailty of his nature. As we are prone to pride and passion, so, and more than we, is Oedipus. That fact moves us, and for that reason Sophocles has given his hero the qualities which Aeschylus employed to show that ruin comes 'not from wealth alone, nor from birth alone,' but from sin.

[1] I have discussed this question in my essays on the Electras of Sophocles and Euripides in the *Classical Quarterly* 1918 and the *Classical Review* 1918.

CHAPTER II

THE INNOCENCE OF OEDIPUS

My assertion that Oedipus is innocent demands, as I am aware, defence and explanation. It must be admitted that the hero, when he stands revealed as the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother, feels himself utterly vile, polluted, and the polluter of all who have dealings with him. He has done, however unwittingly, things which have made him worse than the meanest of criminals. Are we not forced to admit that Sophocles here treats his Oedipus as a sinner duly punished? Has he not failed to realise that it is the motive and the knowledge of consequences that determine moral guilt?

Without doubt, there was a time when a Greek audience would have been unable to distinguish between the guilt of the deliberate parricide and the misfortune of a man like Oedipus. Some vague minds even to-day find it impossible to realise that, for example, Tess of the D'Urbervilles was a chaste woman. And in the audience of Sophocles, though Greek literature and Greek law entitle us to claim that the work of enlightenment had gone far, there must have been many simple people who, if they had been examined by a lawyer, could not have made the distinction clear. Our question, however, concerns Sophocles, and an audience which is swayed by the emotions suggested by this play. How would ordinarily intelligent Athenians of the time of Sophocles feel, not simply think, about Oedipus?

In the first place, very few of them—Euripides and some of his friends—would realise clearly that the supposed 'pollution' and the infectious nature of that pollution were the figments of old superstition. The *Hercules Furens* allows us to say so much. They would be able easily enough to imagine the state of mind of a person who believed in the definite, material, and infectious, pollution. But, for their own part, they would feel, as would an enlightened man of our own day, that the ignorance of Oedipus

absolves him from all blame. Anyone, however clear-headed, must, of course, feel that it is natural and right for Oedipus to experience a terrible emotion, with something of remorse and disgust, an instinctive sense of shame and intolerable pain. But we have no right to suppose that this is all. Most of the audience, perhaps Sophocles himself (though the *Oedipus at Colonus* makes this doubtful), felt and recognised as right the peculiar horror expressed by Creon when he bids the citizens put out of sight 'a thing polluted so that neither Earth nor Light nor Heaven's Rain may welcome it.'

That difference between the ancient and the modern view must in fairness be admitted. To the average spectator of our play the man who had shed human blood was, until absolved by ritual purification and also, in some cases, by a judicial verdict of justification, physically unclean, infectious, and likely to be a cause of disaster to all with whom he came in contact. How strongly this superstition worked, even in the days of the 'enlightenment,' we may gather from the commonplaces which occur in a series of speeches composed by the orator and statesman Antiphon as a model for pleaders in Athenian courts[1]. This is the kind of argument to which a jury will respond:

> It is against your own advantage that this person, so blood-stained and so foul, should have access to the sacred precincts of your gods and should pollute their purity; should sit at the same table with yourselves, and should infect the guiltless by his presence. It is this that causes barrenness in the land. It is this that brings misfortune upon men's undertakings. You must consider that it is for yourselves you are acting when you take vengeance for this murder....

The notion of the potent and disastrous blood-pollution is alive in Athenian society, no mere archaistic and imaginative revival of the poet. Though the clear vision of human love enables the Theseus of Euripides[2] to see the essential innocence and harmlessness of his friend, even he does not deny the need for purification. His contempt for the danger of infection is for the audience a

[1] *Tetral.* I 2.

[2] Euripides *H.F.* 1215 ff. The whole scene is significant. Line 1230 may help us to realise that in the *Oedipus* at lines 1424 ff. Creon behaves, not brutally, but as a normal and pious Athenian would behave: but at lines 1466 ff. and 1510 with him also human kindness prevails over superstitious fear. Less directly than Euripides, without the denial of the popular belief, Sophocles also points the way to the truth.

revelation of generosity, a triumph of reason and of friendship over the current superstition.

But we must make yet another admission. Though there are few traces here of the crude old superstition whose vitality is attested, for example, by the words of Plato's *Laws*[1]: 'He that has been slain by violence is angry against the doer, and pursues his murderer with shocks and terrors,' there is certainly an appeal to the tragic notion that the dead man cries for vengeance. Though Sophocles has deliberately suppressed the Aeschylean and pre-Aeschylean notion of the ancestral curse and the inherited taint, we must not forget, in estimating the probable effect of his work, the ancient feeling, to which sanction was still given even by the enlightened practice of Athenian justice, that a killing was a wrong inflicted primarily on the family, and that it imposed, upon the kinsman, in the first place, the duty of requital. It is the family of a murdered man that demands the trial of his murderer. It is on a kinsman, who must claim first cousinship at least to the deceased, that the duty of prosecution falls[2]. This fact, and the frame of mind which it induces, must be remembered when we try to realise the emotional effect of the parricide of Oedipus. It may help us if we recall another passage of the *Laws*, in which Plato, prescribing for the good government of a typical Greek city, will have the parricide slain and his body thrown out naked and unburied at a crossroad beyond the precincts of the city. All the officials shall bring stones and shall stone the corpse, thus throwing upon its head the pollution of the state. 'The Justice that stands on watch, the avenger of kindred bloodshed, follows a law...ordaining that if any man hath done any such deed he suffer what he has inflicted. Hath a man slain his father? He must some day die at the hands of his children....When the common blood is polluted, there is no other purification. The polluted blood will not be washed out until the life that did the deed has paid a like death as penalty for the death, and so propitiated and laid to rest the wrath of the whole kinship[3].' In our play, I know, there is nothing quite so savage as this. Yet

[1] IX 865 D.

[2] If the slayer is unknown a proclamation (*προόρρησις*) must be made. The fact should be remembered when, in our play, Oedipus unconsciously proclaims himself an outlaw.

[3] IX 873 E.

the savage superstition is alive in Athens and we shall not appreciate the full tragedy of Oedipus unless we take that fact into account.

Of the incest I need say little. But here also we must remember that for a Greek audience there comes into play, not merely the natural feeling which we share, but also the superstitious sense of a taboo, which makes the tie of family not less but more binding, the pollution not less but more horrible, than it is for us[1]. I will mention only the fact that an Athenian was held justified in killing an adulterer at sight if he were caught with the slayer's wife or mother or sister or daughter, or even with his concubine, if she were the mother of children whom he had acknowledged as his own. So much depended on the purity of citizen blood that a man was forbidden to take back an unfaithful wife under penalty of the loss of citizen rights[2].

These differences between the normal ancient view and the modern view must, in frankness, be admitted. But do they really imply the sweeping corollary, for example, of Professor Murray? Is it true, that Sophocles expects and allows his audience to adopt that further superstition of 'the terrible and romantic past' which makes incest and parricide 'not moral offences capable of being rationally judged or even excused as unintentional'? Is it true that he has allowed 'no breath of later enlightenment to disturb the primaeval gloom of his atmosphere'? That is the question we have to face.

For some of my readers, I hope, to put the question thus plainly is to answer it. Sophocles has, indeed, used all his constructive art in the invention of a plot whose minor incidents as well as its broad effects reveal the hero's piety, his respect for the natural bond of the family, and his instinctive detestation of impurity. But there are some critics who are somehow able to ignore the general impression, or to attribute it to a modern enlightenment which, they think, Sophocles did not share. Because Aristotle has remarked that the hero of a drama, if it is to produce in us the emotion proper to tragedy, must not be perfect, must have faults and make mistakes, such critics refuse to accept the broad presentation of the tragic figure of Oedipus, a hero not

[1] See *e.g.* Plato *Laws* VIII 838 A.

[2] Demosthenes *Aristocrates* 637 § 53, 1374 § 115.

without faults, yet noble, involved, not because of his faults, but in spite of his virtue, in pollution. They must needs find some '*ἁμαρτία*,' besides the tragic mistake, to justify the hero's fall. For such critics it is necessary to dwell for a moment on the detail which was devised by Sophocles, not to justify the catastrophe, but to make us admire the hero and realise his essential nobility.

In Aeschylus, as we have remarked, a sufferer is generally himself responsible for his calamity. The tragedy comes from the fact that a tendency to evil is too strong for the sinner to resist. It is true, therefore, that the story of Oedipus might have been so presented as to suggest the guilt of the sufferer or some mysteriously inherited tendency to evil. Of that fact the Athenian audience was aware. But the Athenian spectators would not therefore, like some modern critics, weigh and ponder every little incident of his story as it unfolded itself to see whether, in fact, Sophocles had made his hero guilty. Happily we can be certain that even had they applied that method the result would have been an acquittal. An Athenian jury would have been amused by the plea of a prosecuting critic who argued, like some modern scholars, that the hero is revealed at lines 779 ff. as a person prone to criminality because he had been brought up as a spoilt young prince; that he must have been provocative in his behaviour since one of his companions was driven to insult him by the taunt of bastardy; that he was hasty and over-inquisitive in his appeal to Apollo, and was ungrateful in his neglect to inform his supposed parents of his departure; or finally—for this plea has been urged by a critic who saw the futility of all the rest[1]—that his *ἁμαρτία* consisted in the criminal negligence with which, in spite of the oracle's evasive answer, he killed an old man and married a comparatively elderly woman. He ought, we are solemnly told, to have been put upon his guard. No jury, I venture to assert, and *a fortiori* no intelligent audience, would find him guilty on such grounds and assess such punishment for such offences.

And however well the prosecuting counsel argued, the advocate for the defence would have an easy task. As Wilamowitz showed[2], the poet has been careful to leave no loophole for misunderstanding. It would have been so easy to make Oedipus the aggressor, as does Euripides, for instance, in the *Phoenissae*. In

[1] Klein *die Mythopoïe des Sophokles* etc. (Eberswalde, 1890). [2] *Hermes* vol. 34.

Sophocles he is attacked in a lonely mountain pass and defends himself against an unprovoked assault. For killing thus committed as an act of self-defence Athenian justice[1] would have pronounced him innocent. After a ceremonial purification he would have been no further troubled by the affair. Unfortunately, 'against his will'—for the whole tragedy assumes that he could not naturally have suspected the truth—the man whom he so justly slew was his own father, the woman whom he quite properly married was his mother. Thus, as an 'involuntary sinner,' he was plunged into calamities most terrible.

But indeed an Athenian of the time of Sophocles would hardly have considered the detail with such care. To him the name of Oedipus suggests, not guilt, but chiefly misfortune. The moral fervour of Aeschylus had given a new interpretation to old stories. But for most Athenians the stories must have continued to illustrate, not the profound reflections of Aeschylus, but the perfectly reasonable, though unreflective, view which most people normally do take of stories. 'Oedipus was at first a happy man, the king of Thebes, the saviour of the state, blest with children, loved by his subjects...but afterwards he became, when he made the great discovery, of all men the most wretched[2].'

As for those critics who look for the *ἁμαρτία* in the course of the drama, not in its antecedents, it should be sufficient to answer that the plague which sets in motion the tragic events is itself the result of the pollution already incurred, and that at the outset, before ever he has insulted Teiresias or suspected Creon of disloyalty, the hero is already an incestuous parricide. But I am aware that this answer will not satisfy the critics, and I shall have more to say on this part of the subject in my next chapter. Here I must insist on the clearness of the distinction made at the crisis of the tragedy between the 'involuntary' acts which have brought

[1] He killed an adversary *χειρῶν ἅρξαντα ἀδίκων* (see Roberts and Gardner *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy* vol. II p. 66 and Hicks *Manual of Greek Historical Inscriptions* p. 157) and also *ἐν ὁδῷ καθελών* (Demosthenes *Aristocrates* p. 637).

[2] See Euripides ap. Aristoph. *Frogs* 1182. The contempt of Wilamowitz for those who read *εὐδαίμων* is not, I think, deserved. In view of *O.T.* 1197 it is rash to assume that Euripides could not have applied the word to Oedipus: and the jest is improved if Aristophanes has really succeeded in making a valid, though pedantic, point against the accuracy of the Rationalist. Oedipus was *εὐτυχής*, and most people would have called him, inaccurately, *εὐδαίμων*.

on the catastrophe, and the 'voluntary evils' of excessive agony and self-mutilation which are its result. The messenger who brings from the palace the news of Jocasta's death insists upon the involuntary nature of the 'sin.' He sharply distinguishes 'those many secret evils that lurk hidden in the house—so foul, not all the waters of Phasis and of Ister could wash it clean'—from those 'other evils' which in a moment shall be displayed to the light, 'ills *voluntary, not unpurposed*,' ἑκόντα κοὐκ ἄκοντα.

The laws of nature have been violated, and the violator has incurred pollution. Yes, but the pollution was incurred without the willing consent of the sinner, in spite of a life whose governing purpose had been to avoid the sin (793 ff., 997 ff.). Oedipus himself makes a like distinction: it was Apollo who brought these things to pass (1329 ff.), the ills which are the worst: but the blinding stroke upon the eyes was inflicted, not only by the hand, but with the full will and intent, of Oedipus.

This distinction between the voluntary and the involuntary is, of course, a commonplace of Greek tragedy. Its recognition marks an important stage in the history, not only of criminal law, but also of morality and religion. For this drama it has an importance which seems to have escaped the notice of many learned interpreters. To its significance for an Athenian audience the earlier literature will perhaps provide a key. Poets who died before the great 'enlightenment,' whose morality was the model for old-fashioned propriety, and who would certainly have felt that Oedipus was physically polluted and infectious, had yet a perfectly good conception of the difference between the intentional criminal and the unfortunate who had committed an unintentional crime. It was quite possible for a Greek to believe that certain conduct had made a man physically unfit for human society, and yet to acquit him of all blame. The thought is expressed in different language from our own. But essentially, we shall find, the normal Greek view of such a case was likely to be no less sympathetic and intelligent than our own.

For a statement of the fundamental notions we may go to Simonides, whose spirit, though he was a poet of Ceos, has been recognised as Attic. He was a favourite at Athens, and an acknowledged exponent of the higher elements of popular morality.

Scopas, a prince of Thessaly, asking, doubtless, for flattery, had suggested to Simonides as a theme for song the famous saying of a great statesman, Pittacus of Mytilene. Pittacus became sole ruler of his city at a time of civil discord, but laid down his office, not attempting to make himself a despot, because, as he said, 'It is difficult to be a man of virtue.' When Scopas, prince of Thessaly, asks his courtier poet for an opinion on that *dictum*, we have the right to think, in words like those of Herodotus concerning Croesus: 'This he asked, expecting to be told that it was indeed difficult, but that Scopas by peculiar excellence had conquered the difficulties. Had Pittacus been Scopas, he had not needed to lay aside his power.' But the poet took his harp and answered in far different fashion, courtly yet wise:

> Difficult, say you? Difficult to be a man of virtue, truly good, shaped and fashioned without flaw in the perfect figure of four-squared excellence, in body and mind, in act and thought?

That is the text. There is a gap in our tradition. Later comes this answer:

> Nor to my ears does the current phrase of Pittacus ring true—though wise was he who uttered it. He said 'twas difficult to be a man of virtue. I answer, only a god can have that boon. For a man—if he be overtaken by a calamity against which no device availeth, needs must he be evil; there is no escape. As any man is good if fortune grant it, so if his fortune bring him evil, evil is the man: and those of us are best whom the gods love. Therefore will I not waste the lot and portion of life that is granted me in an empty aspiration, a bootless quest, the search for a perfect man among all of us that reap the harvest of the earth's wide fields in Hellas—though, if I find one, I will bring you news. No! I have praise and love for every man who does no deed of shame of his own will. Necessity not even the gods resist....Enough for me a man who gives not way to utter evil, utter lawlessness, a man who hath in him the sense of that fairness which profits his city, a man whose heart is sound. No reproach shall such a man have of me—because you cannot count the generation of the children of utter folly. All deeds are good if they be free from baseness.

There is scope here for misunderstanding, and indeed Simonides has been accused of flattering the prince by extolling 'the morality of the second-best.' The truth is that he is warning his patron against self-righteousness. Pittacus was wise, for he realised the temptations and dangers of power. He is to be criticised only because his maxim did not sufficiently insist on the dangers that beset a man, as man, even if he is not a king. Let Scopas re-

member, however well he rules his people, that, even so, he is but a man, and therefore imperfect. The best of men can, it is true, obey their sense of right, refusing to violate Aidôs; and, therefore, of the best it may be said that they are in a sense 'good' since there is nothing 'shameful' in their intentional and purposed deed and thought. But, even so, they are not secure. Perfection, if calamity comes, is not possible. In some circumstances the best that can be attained is the avoidance of the wilful violation of justice and moderation. If calamity 'unmanageable,' not to be put off by any wit of man, engulf us, we cannot be perfect men... yet we may, if we are as noble as Oedipus, be worthy of praise and love, even in our shame and actually in our moral catastrophe.

Is that not true? The Stoics denied it. Virtue, and therefore happiness, they said, were possible for all men, however sick in mind and body and estate. But, in order to make good that claim, they had to narrow their definition of virtue. The good will is always possible—save in insanity. And the good will is always, in itself, virtuous. True, and no man is to be blamed if he has well striven, 'doing of his own will nothing shameful.' But is it possible for the best life to be attained without good fortune, or, as Simonides and Sophocles would say, without the gift of the gods? Simonides answers by a distinction important for the understanding of the *Oedipus*, as it is for much else in Greek literature and in our own experience. *A man may be guilty through no fault of his own*[1], and no man, however excellent in intention and in act, no man, even, however blest by fortune or the gods, achieves and keeps perfection.

[1] That is one of the most important principles in Greek morality. An amusing application will be found in Herodotus III 43, the story of a ruler who tried in vain to be the 'most just of men.' An application whose importance and truth we must all at this time recognise is made by Thucydides (III 82) when he says that 'War, because it puts men into a situation in which they are not free agents (*ἀκουσίους ἀνάγκας*), makes them like their circumstances'—worse than they are in time of peace. When Socrates enunciated his paradox that no one willingly does wrong, he was using old language for his new thought. The old proverbial moralities divided evils into 'voluntary and involuntary.' 'Ills sent by the gods, inevitable, destined, necessary,' must be borne without excessive grief and complaint. Such an evil was the pollution of Oedipus. But the self-blinding was an additional evil, self-imposed, voluntary, and therefore morally different. The comment of Socrates would have been that this act also was involuntary, since it was done with the intent of finding forgetfulness: had he known, as later he knows, that peace of mind comes only through Sophrosyne, Oedipus would not have mutilated himself.

That this idea, essentially true, is expressed in language which misleads many of us, and shocks some, is due to the inheritance of a tradition which used epithets, now exclusively moral, in a political sense. A 'good' man has sometimes meant a brave and cunning fighter, a wise counsellor, a just judge. Elsewhere and in a different society it means a successful, respectable, and therefore probably industrious labourer, or trader, or householder. Sometimes, again, it has meant a man born of 'good family' and maintaining the standards, whatever they happen to be, of his class. In all these cases the possibility of 'goodness' must obviously depend on good fortune—and it is true enough that there is something which deserves to be called 'goodness' in the happy warrior, the substantial householder, or the aristocratic 'noble.' Simonides, though he admits the obvious, adds—he is probably not the first to add it—that there *is* a sort of goodness, limited, yet valuable, which is not dependent on the turn of luck. Thus he gives us a new interpretation, entirely free from cynicism, of the Homeric observation that men's minds are good or bad according to the kind of weather Zeus allows them[1]. The distinction between the will to goodness and the possession of it is implied, though not quite clearly stated. There remains a danger of relapse into a vague theory of irresponsibility. But we, if we emphasize too much the Will, run another danger. We may be tempted to flatter ourselves and our prince by saying that there is no need to trouble about the poverty and misery of our people, because, forsooth, all men can have, without money and without price, the Will to Virtue which is independent of the gifts of the gods.

It may help us to judge more fairly of Simonides—and also of Sophocles—if we notice other passages, not inconsistent with our text, but complementary to it. For example, see what the poetry of Simonides[2] has made of Hesiod's practical advice to the farmer who would be prosperous and respectable:

'Tis said [that is, we know, by Hesiod and many others] that Virtue dwells upon the inaccessible hills, attended by the chaste dancing company of Nymphs divine, not visible to the eyes of all mankind, but only to him whose heart has felt the pang of struggle and the sweat...to him who has won his way by manhood to the height.

[1] *Od.* XVIII 136

τοῖος γὰρ νόος ἐστὶν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
οἷον ἐπ' ἦμαρ ἄγῃσι πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

[2] *Fr.* 58 Bk.

There is no 'morality of the second-best' in that! But it is true, unfortunately, that a farmer, however well he works, may be foiled by weather and by soil. So, in the moral sphere, there are real limitations to man's freedom. Though he strive hard for excellence, a man needs the gift of the gods, success, if his virtue is to be the successful virtue, the perfect prize of excellence at which he aims.

None winneth virtue without the gods, no city and no mortal man. 'Tis the god that deviseth all, and among men there is no life altogether free from calamity[1].

Moreover, it is from this very fact that a man, however good his intention, however brave his effort of thought and will, may always fail—falling, as the Greeks say, into involuntary evils, because the gods or his daimon or luck or circumstances will have it so—that a pious Greek refuses to call men happy till they are dead. This same Simonides may remind us:

Since you are but a man, never presume to say what to-morrow brings—nor, when you see a man happy, how long a time he will be so[2].

Perhaps the noblest expression of the frame of mind suggested to a Greek by such reflections is the Spartan prayer:

King Zeus, grant us the good for which we pray—aye, and the good we pray not for: and, though we pray for it, avert from us the evil.

Upon that lofty strain it would be pleasant to end my chapter. But I dare not stop here. Our attempt to prove the innocence of Oedipus has led us back to the problem which lies at the heart, not only of the tragedy of the Greek theatre, but also of the tragedy of human life. If the innocent suffer—and who, in these days, will deny it?—if the faults of men are visited upon their own heads and the heads of others in retribution more terrible than the faults deserve, what are we to think of the justice of the gods? That question, which remains with us, was faced and variously answered by the Greeks. The terms in which they answer it are not our own: but if we rightly understand their meaning, the answers are the answers with which the world must reckon to-day.

In the house of Zeus, said Homer, stand two jars from which he dispenses to mortals good and evil alike. That simple doctrine is not compatible with the perfect goodness of the gods. Still more incompatible is another ancient doctrine that the gods are jealous of a man's prosperity and deliberately tempt him to his

[1] *Fr.* 61 Bk. [2] *Fr.* 32 Bk.

own destruction. We need new explanations when philosophy or religion insists upon the goodness of the gods. We shall certainly deny the doctrine of the divine jealousy and the divine temptation. We may deny that evil comes from the gods. But we cannot escape the fact that some of our evils, at any rate, are certainly not due to man. We may say that evil is the punishment of sin, that a man must pay for his faults or for the faults of his ancestors, or we may tell ourselves that suffering is the only road to wisdom. Even so, we have not solved the problem. If we are mystics and assert that apparent evil is, in the sight of the gods or of the Absolute, good, we abandon in logic, though not, of course, in practice, our right to judge of good and evil.

Of the mystical confusion of good and evil we shall find no trace in our play. Of the truth that suffering is a school of wisdom greater use has been made, as we shall presently see, than is admitted by most interpreters. But there is no suggestion that the wisdom justifies the suffering. The theme of an inherited guilt is, as we have already remarked, ignored. That the omission is deliberate becomes obvious when we remember that Sophocles was familiar with the work of Aeschylus, and when we recall how this *motif* is used in the *Antigone* (584 ff.). The tragedy ensues by normal human processes from the act of Oedipus himself. Yet the character and the life of the hero are such as to exclude, for a Greek as for a modern audience, the notion that he has deserved his fate, though his tragedy is heightened by the fact that his defects are precisely those which for a Greek are normally associated with the righteously afflicted sinner. Finally, the plague, the oracles, the prophecies of Teiresias, and the sense, in the background, of the mysterious potency of Zeus and Apollo, imply that, in some sense, the evil comes from the gods. It comes, however, not by miraculous intervention, but through the normal processes of human will and human act, of human ignorance and human failure. Sophocles justifies nothing. He accepts, for his tragic purpose, the story and the gods, simply treating them as if they were true. Whether he thought that in ancient times a real king Oedipus had actually suffered this agony is of no importance. Whether he believed in prophecies or not really matters little. His Oedipus stands for human suffering, and he neither attempts, like Aeschylus, to justify the evil, nor presumes, like Euripides, to

deny its divine origin. That is because his gods—whether he believed in them, or exactly in what sense, does not matter—stand for the universe of circumstance as it is. Aeschylus and Euripides both demand for their worship a God who is good and just. Both therefore must attempt to solve the 'problem of evil.' The pagan gods of Homer and Sophocles require no such reconciliation. They are great and good, and great and bad—like things, and men, and nature. They square with the tragic facts of life, and therefore, we, who do not think that the lightning is the flash of the bolt of Zeus, who do not believe that Apollo was born of Leto in the island of Delos, can yet believe in the essential truth of the Sophoclean Apollo. There are in human life great tragedies, moving and wonderful because they flow from human action and are in some measure due to human blunders, yet tragedies for which in no full moral sense can responsibility be ascribed to man. Man is often the victim of circumstance—yes, often his own nobility demands that he shall sacrifice his own most noble qualities. Well, the 'circumstance,' which alone we can call responsible, is poetically represented by Apollo. And the tragedy, which admits this non-moral power, can appeal to all the listeners, whether like Aeschylus, they say at the end of the play: 'Ah yes, it is terrible. Yet my religion tells me that at the heart of it there is the working of a righteous God,' or whether, with the pessimist, we cry out in condemnation of such a universe, or whether we simply admit the tragic facts—and, as to their explanation, are fain to confess our ignorance.

That the language, and sometimes the thought, has an admixture of superstition I have no wish to deny. We recognise a belief which probably none of us shares, when, for example, after Oedipus has told Jocasta of the terrible pronouncement of Apollo, he cries:

> If any judge my life and find therein
> A savage Daimon's work, he hath the truth[1].

In my version I have ventured to translate the words ὠμοῦ δαίμονος by 'malignant stars,' a phrase which recalls to us a kindred, but more familiar, notion. We hear again, from the chorus, of the *Daimon* of Oedipus, immediately after the revelation of the

[1] Line 828 f.

truth[1]. Finally, at the sight of the blinded and humiliated king, the chorus cry:

> What Fury (*δαίμων*) came on thee?
> What evil spirit from afar
> Leapt on thee to destroy?

And Oedipus himself asserts that his calamity is the work of an evil *δαίμων*:

> Alas! Curse of my life (*δαῖμον*), how far
> Thy leap hath carried thee![2]

Of the various meanings and applications of the word *Δαίμων* we need not speak, but something must be said of the popular sense of which Sophocles has here made so tragic a use. Probably none of us believes that with every man there is born and lives and dies a supernatural being, 'an individualised Fortune,' a being upon whom his prosperity and his misfortune somehow depend, his 'guardian angel' if his character and luck be good, a veritable 'demon' if he be born to wickedness or calamity. How far Sophocles himself believed in such a supernatural *Daimon* we do not know. He may, for all we know, have travelled far upon the road towards that 'rationalistic' interpretation of life which issued in the doctrine that a man's character is his fate (*ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων*). The important point for us is this: although the memory of the old superstition, and the fact that some of the audience are probably themselves superstitious, add emotional value to these allusions, yet, so far as the moral inference is concerned, no harm is done. The poet's presentation of the character of the hero, and the judgments which are implied both as to his moral responsibility and as to his innocence, are as clear and as just as if the poet had been a modern rationalist and had substituted for the vivid *Daimon* the vagueness of 'disastrous accident' or 'circumstances unforeseen and beyond control.' For moral judgment, though not for the dramatic value of the poem, it makes little difference whether you attribute the 'involuntary evils' to the gods or to the *Daimon* or to complications of circumstance.

I do not, of course, deny that there is a danger in these, as in all superstitions. My purpose is simply to suggest that the attribution of that part of human misfortune which is not due to man

[1] Line 1195. [2] Lines 1301 ff., and 1311 ff.

either to fate (Herodotus I 19, Soph. *Phil.* 1466), or to Zeus (ὁ πάντ' ἀνάσσων *O. T.* 894, οὐδὲν τούτων ὅτι μὴ Ζεύς Soph. *Trach.* 1278), or to a man's *Daimon*, does not *necessarily* and *always* imply a false estimate of human moral responsibility. For morality, all depends on the particular application which is made. Some men, for example, profess to believe that war is due to the anger of God, some that it is due to the malignant activity of the devil. The result may be, and sometimes is, a criminal negligence or a fanatical barbarity. But what matters for morality is simply that such persons, whether or not they are superstitious, should be sufficiently clear-sighted to help one another in the task of abolishing all natural, human, and avoidable causes of such crime. No Athenian could possibly have inferred from the fact that the calamity of Oedipus is ascribed to his *Daimon* or to Apollo the notion that it is useless for a man to attempt to live decently and to honour his parents. Most doctrines are capable both of a higher and of a lower moral application. There were many in the audience who would have accepted without question the immoral theory, had it been suggested by the poet's treatment, that the gods tempt men to their ruin. They would have felt, like the grumbling old moralist of Megara[1]:

> In nothing be over-zealous! The due measure in all the works of man is best. Often a man who zealously pushes towards some excellence, though he be pursuing a gain, is really being led astray by the will of some divine power which makes those things that are evil lightly seem to him good, and makes those things seem to him evil which are for his advantage.

Sophocles, as we shall see, has made his story a reminder of the fallibility of human endeavour and of the importance of moderation. But he has not treated Apollo or the *Daimon* of the hero as a devilish tempter luring him into sin. His moral is more nearly, though not quite exactly, expressed in another pronouncement of Theognis[2]:

> No man, O Kyrnus, is the cause of his own ruin or his own advantage. The gods are the givers of both: nor hath any man, as he works, the knowledge in his heart whether the end of his labour be good or evil. Often he thinks to make the issue evil, and lo! he hath made it good, or thinking to make it good, he hath made it evil. To no man also cometh all that he desires. The limits of a cruel helplessness restrict us. We are but men, and

[1] Theognis 401 ff. [2] Lines 133 ff.

so our thoughts are vain; no certain knowledge have we; and it is the gods that bring all ends to pass according to their mind.

No one, I suppose, has insisted more strongly than the poet Pindar on the need for personal effort if success or virtue is to be won: but no one, also, has insisted more strongly on the doctrine that both good and evil come from 'the gods' or from a man's *Daimon*. Pindar's athletes and princes stand at the height of human fortune. They need to be reminded, first, that success has come, not only by their own effort, but also as the gift of the gods, and, secondly, that no mortal is exempt from those reverses of fortune which come also from the gods. Just as a man must strive if he is to succeed, yet may fail in spite of noblest endeavour, so, if he fail, he may or may not be guiltless, yet his failure will be due to causes greater than himself. 'It is according to the *Daimon* of their lives that men are born wise and good' (*Ol.* IX 29), and 'the flower of wisdom grows in a man as the gift of a god' (*Ol.* XI 10): 'it is the fate which is born with a man that decides the issue of all his doing' (*Nem.* V 40), and 'we are not all born for a like fortune, but are set on different roads by the different apportionment of fate which is given to each' (*Nem.* VII 5). 'It is the goddess Theia who gives the athlete his glory[1],' though 'men's valour differs according to their *Daimones*...and Zeus himself, who is master of all things, gives us our good and our evil' (*Isth.* V 7, 11, 52). Pindar, it is true, lays more stress on the aristocrat's inheritance of virtue and good fortune than would a democratic Athenian. But the essential notions persist. On the one hand, no virtue comes without the virtuous endeavour. On the other hand, in spite of all endeavour, 'in a little while the pleasantness of the life of mortals grows, and in a little while it falls to earth, shaken down by the turn of the purpose of the gods. Creatures of a day, what is it to be? What is it to be nothing? A man is a dream of a shadow. Yet when there comes to a man the gleam of happiness that is given by Zeus, bright is the light that is upon him, though it be but the light of mortality, and all his life is blest' (*Pyth.* VIII 92 ff.).

Such is the spirit which the tragedy of Oedipus is intended to inspire. The name of the spirit is *Sophrosyne*. The *motifs*

[1] Editors have not observed that the goddess rules the whole construction from line 1 to line 10. The point of the whole paragraph is contained in the last clause.

which the poet has used might have been so treated as to produce a very different impression. Had Sophocles chosen he might have treated Oedipus as a willing sinner justly punished. But that method would have made the tragedy less tragic. The poet and his audience would not have faced the deepest and the greatest tragedy of human life. Or, had he chosen, he could have used the theme of Apollo's oracular guidance in a spirit which insisted on the devilish relentlessness of the god. The audience would have responded, though the more enlightened of them would have been shocked. The mind of the spectators is attuned to the influences both of a higher and of a lower appeal. The reader will judge whether I am justified in suggesting that it is to the higher morality that the poet has addressed himself. He neither justifies the gods by making Oedipus a criminal nor condemns the gods because the agony of Oedipus is undeserved. He bids his audience face the facts.

To the question whether beyond the grave there is reconciliation and peace, poets, philosophers, and divines, have their various answers. Tragedy, which concerns this life and the undoubted sufferings of this life, is noble still, even if the poets, philosophers, and divines can find a happy answer. Sometimes Sophocles writes as if he has the intuition of a happy solution. But his work as a tragedian is to face the facts of life. Whatever be our own interpretation of those facts, we shall be moved by their presentment in his drama.

CHAPTER III

THE TYRANT

WE have still to consider the chorus which is the main anchor of those critics who suppose that Sophocles, being a pagan and extraordinarily liable to moral obtuseness, really meant us to condemn Oedipus in a way which as rational moral beings we cannot approve. These critics find in lines 863 ff. the central doctrine of the poet[1]. Critics who take the more reasonable view of the character and fate of Oedipus have unfortunately never dealt with this suggestion as it deserves. They are generally content to treat the ode as irrelevant. In this chapter my attempt will be to show, first that the ode is relevant, secondly that it expresses not the judgment of Sophocles, but the fears of the chorus, distressed and agitated by the scenes with Teiresias, Creon and Jocasta. The chorus say in effect: 'We hope that Oedipus is not really, as some of his words and actions suggest, a bad man! Of course, if he is, he will suffer. But we hope he is not. On the other hand, it is a serious matter for religion if the oracles are false.' They assume, as many Greek and other moralists assume, that only the guilty are ruined. The spectator already knows better. He knows that the king is indeed to suffer all the calamities which the chorus associate with wickedness. He also knows that, although Oedipus is imperfect, and imperfect in just those ways which naturally occasion the suspicion that he is a 'wicked tyrant,' he is essentially good, and is to suffer not because of his guilt, but in spite of his goodness.

That is the thesis which I have to prove. I must ask your patience if I begin with a literal prose version of the poem. You will remember that Teiresias has denounced Oedipus and that Oedipus has thrown out his accusations against the honour of the

[1] J. Oeri in his article *die* Μέρη τῆς Τραγῳδίας (in *Festschrift zur* 49 *Versamml. Deutschs. Philol.* Basel, 1907) says 'the soul of the piece lives' in lines 863 ff. That is the view recently taken by Sudhaus.

prophet and of Creon. The chorus have asserted that until clear proof is given they will continue to believe the hero innocent, the prophet, though generally wise, mistaken. Creon and Oedipus have violently quarrelled, and Jocasta, in order to comfort her husband, has told a story of her past, which has only led to worse revelations from Oedipus. We have heard the doubts that she has thrown on oracles. We have heard the talk of terrible pollutions. Then the chorus sing:

As I go through life be this the destiny that walks with me: ever may I win the prize of reverent purity in word and deed—whereof[1] there are Laws set forth, Laws that walk on high, that were brought to birth in the region of Heaven's pure aether. Their Father is Olympus, none other. The race of mortals engendered them not, nor shall forgetfulness ever put them to sleep. In them is a god, and he is great and grows not old.

So far, no one doubts the application. Distressed by the talk of pollution and of oracles that are false, the chorus pray that they may always be pure and reverent. Now comes the disputed passage:

It is Insolence that breeds a Tyrant, Insolence surfeited to no good purpose with wealth, surpassing the due measure, and not profitable. Then the sinner climbs the highest pinnacle, and leaps into a helpless doom, most fatal, where he can move no foot to aid himself. But to that wrestling which is good, and for the city's good, I pray the god never to put an end! To the god will I still cling as my defence!

Still, if a man walk proudly in word or deed, fearing not Justice, nor reverencing the gods enshrined, then may an evil destiny seize him for his ill-fated wantonness, if he refuse to gain his gains by justice and to keep himself from all irreverence, or if to evil purpose he touch things that are untouchable. Where such things are done, what mortal man shall boast that he can save his life from the arrows of the gods? If such doings are held in honour, why should I worship the gods in dance and hymn?

I will no longer go in reverence to the inviolate centre-stone of earth—the omphalos of Delphi—nor to the shrine at Abae, nor to Olympia, if these oracles fit not the event, so that men may point and say they fit! O Master, if thou art rightly named the Master, Zeus, King of All, I pray that these things escape not Thee and thy everlasting governance. Lo! Already they are setting at nought the oracles that were spoken of old concerning Laïus, and they fade. Nowhere is Apollo manifest in worship and in power. Religion dies!

If you examine carefully the description of the sinner, you must admit that it would be strange indeed if Sophocles really

[1] The relative is vague: the effect is almost equivalent to 'reverence and purity whereof,' though there is also felt 'words and deeds whereof....'

meant it as a true account of Oedipus. But the question which we have to answer is this:—is there anything in what the chorus have so far witnessed which is likely to make them fear that Oedipus may really be such a sinner as they describe?

Critics who take a sensible view of the character of Oedipus generally answer that the description simply does not apply. They assert that the ode becomes quite irrelevant to the drama, and they look about for something in the life of contemporary Athens which Sophocles may be supposed to be rebuking. We do not know the exact date of the *Oedipus*, and a wide field is opened for such conjectures. Some find in the dishonouring of 'the gods enshrined' a reference to the famous mutilation of the Hermae. Others speak vaguely of the sophistic movement, or of the intellectual tendencies of Pericles and Anaxagoras. Others, more boldly, find that every phrase is suitable to the circumstances of an obscure scandal in Athenian politics connected with the treasures of Delphi. These ingenious persons even use the reference thus discovered as conclusive evidence for the date of the play. But the maxims stated by the chorus are traditional and so familiar that no ancient audience, without a more specific reference, could think the poet was alluding to contemporary politics. Bacchylides provides us, for example, with a short refutation of such perverse ingenuities by putting into the mouth of Menelaus, who is demanding from the Trojans the restitution of his stolen wife, a speech which, phrase for phrase, corresponds to the moralising of our chorus.

'Trojans,' he says, 'and lovers of war, the grievous troubles of mortal men come not from Zeus, who rules on high and beholdeth all things. Nay, every man hath set before him a plain road that leads to unswerving Justice who walks with chaste Lawfulness and prudent Righteousness. Happy are they whose sons choose her to dwell with them. Insolence that knows not reverent fear, with all her wealth of crafty gainful wiles and wicked lightness of mind, aye, Insolence it is that giveth a man at one stroke another's power and riches, then hurls him down to depths of ruin.'

Here we have all the elements: Justice, Law, Purity, and Zeus the Ruler in the Height; the contrasted Insolence that fears not Justice, that is irreverent, and that seeks an evil gain; and finally the fall from the height of power and prosperity into the gulf of ruin.

Another interpretation is suggested by Professor Murray, more

tolerable than the theory of complete irrelevance, yet leaving the poem as a blot upon the play, 'moving its wings heavily' indeed. He supposes that the chorus are wondering whether Creon is a traitor and Teiresias a fraud. I submit that this view also implies a great reproach to Sophocles. At this stage in the drama we are anxious about Oedipus and Jocasta, and about no one else. If this chorus had followed directly upon the quarrel with Creon, Professor Murray would have saved the face of the poet. Where it stands, if the poem refers to Creon and Teiresias, we must admit that Sophocles has *pro tanto* destroyed the tragic effect. But, of course, if Professor Murray's interpretation is really the natural interpretation of the Greek, there is no more to be said. Sophocles, like many other great poets, has made a mistake, and we must admit it.

But is it the natural interpretation? The first stanza clearly refers to the hero and heroine, springing directly from the talk of oracles and of pollution. The last stanza speaks of the oracles again. In the second stanza the 'good wrestling for the city's good' surely refers to all that we have heard, and so often heard, of the salvation brought to Thebes by Oedipus. Is it not natural also, even for a modern reader, having witnessed the growing anger and suspicion of the king, to think of Oedipus when he hears the words 'Insolence it is that breeds a tyrant'? I hope to show that for an ancient audience the connection with Oedipus was not only possible, but obvious. Finally, the third stanza, in the perfectly normal lyrical fashion, returns from the hope that the 'good wrestling' will be rewarded, to the theme of the wicked man's punishment. That is the natural and straightforward construction. 'May I be pure and reverent: I know that Insolence breeds a tyrant, and that that ends in ruin: but I hope for the best, I hope that true patriotic effort may be rewarded: still, if a man is wicked....' The phrases exactly correspond, the 'evil fate' of 887 to the 'ill-fated' helpless doom of 877, the 'ill-starred wantonness' of 888 to the vain surfeiting of 874, and the irreverence and the touching of the untouchable in 890 f. to the reverent purity of 864. Both the normal lyrical method and the particular expressions here employed make untenable the theory that we have a series of disjointed reflections about Creon and Teiresias as well as about Oedipus and Jocasta.

We ought, then, at least to attempt an interpretation which makes the ode an expression of anxiety about the character and fate of Oedipus. That brings us to our chief difficulty and to our chief task. Does the description fit the hero? So far as the final judgment of Sophocles and his audience is concerned, we have already seen reason to answer 'no!' For the chorus, ignorant of the sequel, and having witnessed the scenes with Teiresias, Creon and Jocasta, I believe that all is natural. The forebodings are expressed, not as an English spectator would express them, but as Greeks, imbued with the traditional Greek maxims, almost inevitably must. When they say that a 'tyrant'—here, as Jebb admits, 'a bad king'—is engendered by the 'insolence which comes from a surfeit of riches, both excessive and unprofitable,' we do not altogether fail to understand. They have seen Oedipus behaving in an overbearing manner, and they are afraid that he is puffed up with success. That is easy enough. It is the second description of the sinner that surprises an English or a German critic. It is true that the suggestion of the 'touching of the untouchable,' the violation of things inviolate, is natural enough to those who have been profoundly shocked by the talk of a monstrous marriage of Oedipus with his own mother. They wonder, hoping against hope, whether Oedipus is really the sort of man who is capable of such a crime. Of course they have no suspicion that the marriage is already an accomplished fact, and that it happened in circumstances which leave Oedipus morally guiltless. It is true also that talk of irreverence is entirely justified by the king's unwarrantable denunciation of Teiresias and by the queen's scepticism about oracles. In each of these matters we can readily understand the motive of Sophocles. Oedipus is essentially pure: yet the chorus may well tremble at his words. He is essentially pious: yet his behaviour might well suggest that he is impious about prophecy. But there remains a phrase which, one editor insists, 'no interpretation in the world' can make relevant to Oedipus:—'If he refuse to gain his gains by just means.' To any modern audience that phrase seems curiously unsuitable. Our question is whether it would seem natural to a Greek. The clue we shall find, as usual, in the normal, conventional, morality. Once admit that what has happened is sufficient to disturb an anxious person who sympathises but does not, of course, know

the future, and sufficient to make him wonder whether, after all, Oedipus is really a bad man with a tyrant's insolence, and you have made the whole poem plain. For the characteristics of the sinner in the second strophe are the characteristics of the normal traditional 'bad king.'

The quotation from Bacchylides to which I referred earlier in this chapter reminds us that these characteristics are in fact simply the characteristics of a prosperous bad man. And Athens developed her notion of the typical tyrant from the assumption, not altogether warranted by her history, and contradicted by her own view of Theseus and other heroic kings, that monarchy on the whole means government by a bad man who is prosperous.

A king is rich and powerful, and therefore tempted, like all rich and powerful men, to be proud and despotic. If he is a good king, he rules for the good of his people, with their willing obedience, trusting and trusted, sharing his power with others. If he is, or becomes, a 'tyrant' he wields his power for his own advantage, his policy is dictated by the love of gain, he does not trust his friends, he claims to be sole ruler, sharing his authority with no one, and acknowledging no restraint of law. This conventional picture of the tyrant or bad king is a constant theme in the later Greek literature. We can trace it clearly—the characteristics are always in essentials the same—in Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom. Scholars who delight in the search for 'the Source' of a doctrine or a literary formula have worked hard at the tyrant. They have shown, by analysing the common characteristics and the slight differences of detail, that neither Plato nor Xenophon invented the 'type.' They have answered that the type must have been invented by someone who was directly or indirectly copied by all the rest. The lost treatise of Antisthenes, *Archelaus or an Essay on Kingship*, is sometimes called the 'Source.' But Euripides has combined in a famous passage of the *Ion* many of the characteristic traits. Very well, the Source used by Antisthenes was Euripides—or perhaps they both used another Source unknown to us[1]. We have thus a sort of pedigree for the type, Antisthenes copies Euripides, Plato

[1] See H. Gomperz in *Wiener Studien* 27 (1905) pp. 174 ff., and note in *Wiener Studien* 24 (1902) pp. 1–69. Full references to the literature of the subject are given by Swoboda in Hermann's *Lehrbuch der griech. Antiquitäten* 1913 vol. I part 3.

and Isocrates and Xenophon, all, in their different ways, copy Antisthenes. Aristotle copies again, and so on. The whole enquiry is fascinating, but dangerous. The results are vitiated by one omission. These scholars do not sufficiently allow for the common inheritance of popular, proverbial, talk. In Athens the *Tyrannis* is historically connected with the rule of the Peisistratids. That rule left memories of hate, partly, no doubt, because, although Peisistratus conferred great benefits on Athens, his son became in the face of opposition more oppressive; partly also because all Greeks, even the Spartans who had their own hereditary kings, disliked the notion of despotic power, particularly when it was exercised without the excuse of royal birth; partly again because the Persians themselves the slaves, as the Athenians thought, of a monstrous despotism, attempted to restore the Peisistratid. In tragedy we can trace the development in the popular mind of the equation Tyrant=Despot=Bad King. And Bad King means really a man in a position of great power and great wealth using his power and wealth badly. This popular development gives to the tragedians the opportunity for a fine piece of linguistic drama. They can use the word Tyrannos simply to mean a prince of great power, practically as a synonym of the Homeric Basileus, without any sinister effect. They can also use it for a despot, good or bad, a man of powers unrestrained by law, therefore a man greatly tempted to arrogance. Finally they can use it, as Sophocles does in this chorus, to mean a man who has yielded to temptation, who has seized power unjustly or who exercises his power, even if it was righteously acquired, in a manner which makes him, in the modern sense of the word, a tyrant. All that reflects and adapts to dramatic uses the popular vagueness[1]. When an author begins to formulate popular notions, classifying, analysing, modifying, and making clear, he is, of course, likely to produce (as Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and very probably Antisthenes, did) a picture varying in detail from that of other authors, but in very striking traits exactly parallel. Similar notions similarly expressed do not

[1] When Hippias of Elis (*O.T. Arg.* II, Jebb p. 4) distinguished between the Tyrannus and the Basileus, he probably did so in order to insist that a vague popular distinction ought to be rigidly observed by correct speakers. Alcaeus *fr.* 37 clearly uses the word *τύραννος ad invidiam*, and in Aesch. *P. V.* 736 the context shows that there is malice. Is not *Ζεὺς εἰς τὰ πάνθ' ὁμῶς βλαισος*? Cf. Plut. *Vit. Hom.* (Homer did not call *τὸν βιαίως καὶ παρανόμως ἄρχοντα* a Tyrannos, because the word is post-Homeric).

necessarily in Greek literature indicate the use of the same literary sources or of any literary source. Simply the traditional, popular ideas are worked up again and again in poetry, history and philosophy.

Is the phrase of the chorus—'unless he gain his gains by justice'—still remote and difficult? If so, I must elaborate my argument, and try to show, at length for which I make a preliminary apology, how obvious to any Greek is the connection between the thought of tyranny and the thought of unjust gain.

First, then, all men love gain.

Ἀνέρες ἀλφησταί, whatever it may have meant when the phrase was first coined, meant to Athenian ears 'gainful men,' as Aeschylus shows us in his account of the ruin of the house of Oedipus: ruin caused by 'the wealth of gainful men grown to too great fatness' (*Sept.* 770). The Greeks frankly admit the truth that most men are most interested in profit-making. Solon himself, the champion of moderation, acknowledges that the desire for wealth is set in men by the gods, and cannot be uprooted. Only, he insists, ill-gotten gains are fleeting and dangerous. Antiphon says, and he is simply repeating a commonplace, that all men desire riches (*fr.* D), and Aristotle places in the forefront of his analysis of the causes of the overthrow of kings 'the greatness of their wealth and honour'—simply an old Pindaric, Hesiodic, pair of advantages—'things which all men desire.' A bad man naturally seeks his gain unjustly and, when he has it, is corrupted by it[1].

Secondly, kingship and wealth are proverbially associated. If you are saying that you are free from excessive ambition, a modest man with modest desires, how do you express it? This is what Archilochus says:

I care not for the wealth of Gyges with his gold: I have not ever yet been seized by emulation: I envy not the life of the gods: I long not for a mighty throne (Tyrannis).

The much later Anacreontic has the same combination:

I care not for the wealth of Gyges (King of Sardis): I have never yet been seized by emulation: I envy not the tyrant.

[1] Theognis 86, very few men are πιστοί, οἷσιν ἐπὶ γλώσσῃ τε καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἔπεστιν | αἰδὼς, οὐδ' αἰσχρὸν χρῆμ' ἔπι κέρδος ἄγει. Even Sappho has this commonplace: ὁ πλοῦτος ἀνεῦ σεῦ γ', ἀρέτα, 'στ' οὐκ ἀσίνης πάροικος (*fr.* 80).

Theocritus is modifying this old proverb when he composes his charming lines for the gentle lover:

'Not for me the land of Pelops, nor the fortune of a Croesus, nor the swiftness of the runner who can outstrip the wind' [this is simply the glory that belongs to athletes, and completes the double happiness, wealth and fame] 'but to hold my love in my arms and sing....'

I hope I may take for granted the general connection between riches and a throne. If any doubt remains, Oedipus himself has answered it in his indignant cry

O Wealth and Kingship....

Thirdly, since all men care for wealth, and since the hearts of kings are set on riches, a bad king, more than any other man, will 'seek his gain unjustly.'

Though the attitude of Homer towards greed and rapine leaves something to be desired, he has, of course, his notion of the difference between a good prince and a bad. The devourer of the people and the shepherd of the people are contrasted. The personal element counts for much in judgment on these matters. What more exalted persons treat as the lawful privilege of Zeus-born Kings is regarded by Thersites as robbery. Still, it is significant that Thersites pitches on greed as the topic of his grumbling[1]. The noble prince's view is that he earns his spoil[2]. This fact reminds us that the proverbial moralities are rooted in realities. Just as the sleepless Agamemnon provides a constant trait in the character of the stock good king, so the denunciation of Agamemnon's greed by Achilles is the first example of a series of attacks on what becomes the proverbial greed of kings[3].

The Homeric illustration is particularly illuminating. Oedipus, like Agamemnon, is kept awake by his anxious thought for the good of his people. But Creon, in the so-called 'defence from the probabilities,' which is dramatically as much a warning to the hero as a defence of the speaker himself, reminds Oedipus that humbler men sleep more peacefully. Whereas Oedipus is tortured by the suspicion that his wealth and his power provoke envy and hostile intrigue, Creon reminds him that 'the good things in which true gain lies' are to be had by others than princes. When Oedipus, at the end of the play, is bidden 'not to seek the mastery in everything,' the moral derives its value from the scene in which

[1] *Il.* II 225. [2] *Il.* XII 318. [3] *Il.* I 122, 149, 170, 231.

he flouted the just claim of Creon to a citizen's right. Well, in Homer, we may remember, the proverbial formula for this trait also is to be found. Achilles wants to be master of everyone in everything[1]. Yet this same Achilles provided the moralists with their typical good king who shares his power with others. 'Take an equal share with me of kingship and its rights,' he said to Phoenix[2]. And in the very scene in which he seems to become a tyrant, Oedipus, as Sophocles is careful to remind us, is still a generous ruler, sharing his office and its rewards with Creon and Jocasta[3]. When you recall how the *Iliad* opens with a pestilence sent by Apollo, when you recall the supplication of the aged priest to Agamemnon, and the contrast, in the sequel, between the prophet Calchas, who 'knew things present, future and past[4],' and the king, so blind with anger that he could not 'look behind and before[5],' you begin to realise how Sophocles has used traditional material. Calchas was afraid to speak because he knew the dangerous passions of kings. When he brought himself to speak the truth, he was rewarded by an insulting assurance that his answers were never satisfactory. Is he not the prototype of the typical unwilling prophet of evil? Should not the memory of his treatment help us to interpret the encounter between Oedipus and Teiresias, and warn us not to assume that Teiresias is meant to seem either fraudulent or malignant simply because he contradicts himself by at first refusing to speak and afterwards so eloquently changing his mind? Well, just as the contrast between Agamemnon and Calchas provides an element in the contrast between the wise Teiresias and the misguided king, so, in the subsequent contrast between the cautious Creon and the overmasterful Oedipus, a traditional element is drawn from the attack of Achilles on the greed of Agamemnon. The chorus when it speaks of 'gains that are gained unjustly' is remembering the egoism with which its monarch swept aside the honest sobriety of his injured friend.

But of course much history lies between Homer and Sophocles. The assumption that an unjust greed of gain is characteristic of bad kings is not derived by Sophocles as a direct and original observation from the works of Homer. It has passed into the stock of Greek moral commonplace, and it is for this reason that

[1] *Il.* II 287. [2] *Il.* IX 615. [3] *O.T.* 579 ff. [4] *Il.* I 70. [5] *Il.* I 340.

Sophocles can play on the idea with allusions so subtle that a modern critic, as we have seen, is apt to call them frigid or irrelevant. Turn to Pindar and you find him continually warning his patrons, in the most flattering terms of course, against the deceit of the love of gain. Why? Because that is the besetting temptation of men in high places, above all of wealthy princes. When Pindar's Jason[1] meets the usurping Pelias it is in the most natural course that he should remind the tyrant that 'human hearts are ever, it is true, too quick to value gain above justice, gain won by guile, yet is it meet that I and thou should order our desires by righteousness in our planning for prosperity.' The reference to 'gain before justice' is a hit at the tyrant. The righteous planning for happiness is the characteristic mark of the rightful prince. Or think again, to come nearer home to Athens, of the lawgiver Solon. His wisdom made him refuse to aim at despotism. His critics, who thought him a fool for his pains, would willingly, as they assured him, have submitted to be flayed alive and have their whole posterity ruined for the chance of 'seizing the power, getting great wealth, and being despot of Athens for a single day[2].' But Solon, let us not forget, rebuked the nobles of Attica in terms exactly corresponding to the stock indictment of the tyrant. Even the commons themselves, because they are swayed by money, ruin the city, and the leaders of the people, preparing ruin for themselves by their injustice, revel in their ill-gotten gains, 'sparing not sacred property nor the property of the State, stealing, in order to prey upon everything on which they can lay hands, caring nothing for the solemn foundation of the altar of Justice[3].' But, if you are a democrat in fifth century Athens, you say that a tyrant or an oligarch tends to be greedy. Or you may go further and say, with Antiphon[4], that 'anyone who thinks a tyrant or a king is produced by anything else than lawlessness and the greed of gain is a fool!' In view of the eminence of the critics who have asserted that our chorus is irrelevant, I must conclude that Antiphon's remark was overvigorous.

So sober an historian as Thucydides will provide us with an illustration, not, I venture to think, because he is under any mythistorical delusion, but because he sees no objection to using

[1] *Pyth.* IV, 139. [2] *Fr.* 33, 5. [3] *Fr.* 4. [4] *Fr.* F 56.

popular formulae when they fit the facts.' The Introduction of his great work is a study of the importance of the quest for gain in early Greek history. It is really amazing that he should have been charged by his modern critics with ignoring the economic factor in his work. The artistic unity of the first book depends on the skill with which, under the pretence of glorifying his subject in the epic manner, by proving that his theme is the greatest ever treated, he contrives to show us the importance of sea-power and of the trade that goes with it[1]. The stress which is laid on this element seems to me to give an intelligent reader exactly the right estimate of the probable importance of the economic factor among the causes of the war. For the Peloponnesian war, like other wars, was, as Thucydides makes clear, not merely the result of an economic policy, but rather the fruit of fear and jealousy and territorial ambitions, and, more immediately, of the criminal mismanagement of a petty local dispute. When Thucydides says, therefore, that the despots had an eye in their policy 'mainly to their own profit and to that of their households,' I do not think that he is necessarily contradicting the perfectly just account which he gives elsewhere of the benefits conferred by the Peisistratids on Athens. But he is certainly using words which are commonly employed to contrast the tyrant with the good and lawful king. Then again, on a larger scale, his whole history relates how the Athenian Empire was transformed into a Tyrannis. Unless you are familiar with the proverbial formulae, and unless you recognise how familiar they already were to Athens, you will not appreciate the artistic merit—which in no way, I repeat, detracts from the truthfulness—of the history. Athenian Hegemony in Hellas was acquired as a return for benefit conferred on willing allies[2]. Aristotle asserts that the heroic kings in many instances owed their authority to the fact that they were the first great benefactors of the people in arts or in war. Even so Oedipus won his throne, a free gift, a reward for service rendered. And the Theban elders acknowledge the fact, even when they set against it their fear that he is behaving as a tyrant who rules 'for his own gain.' But the Athenians also fell in love with gain. They fixed a tribute[3]. They were leaders at first of free self-governing allies[4], but they proceeded to reduce the cities and

[1] See *e.g.* 8, 2: 13, 1: 17, 1. [2] 1 75. [3] 1 96. [4] 1 97.

islands to slavery, first Naxos[1], then the rest. Their exactions were the chief cause of disaffection[2]. It is no accident that the process is completed and the effect summed up by Thucydides[3] just before the Corinthians, clamouring for war, denounce the oppressors: 'We are idly looking on while a tyrant city is established in our midst[4].' When we reach the Melian dialogue the Athenians themselves no longer claim to have won their empire justly[5].

My final illustration shall be drawn from tragedy. Enough has already been said to show that for an Athenian audience there existed an immediate and obvious connection between the behaviour of Oedipus towards Creon and the fear of the chorus that the king might after all be a tyrant, whose gains were gains of injustice. Elsewhere I have tried to show how the artistic value of the *Heracles* of Euripides depends on the assumption that the tyrant's motive is the love of gain[6]. Let me now briefly refer to the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, as an illustration of the way in which the use of these stock ideas in tragedy helped to mould the popular conception of the wicked king, and so led up to the formal definition of the later stock tyrannical type. The *Oresteia* is the story of the good king Agamemnon, ruined in the moment of his triumph through his pride: of the usurper Aegisthus, who reaps the fruits of his fall and is himself struck down by the avenger: and finally of the avenger Orestes, who is commanded by the gods to commit an unnatural crime in the just cause of retribution. Here we have nothing like the formal and fully developed tyrant type, but we have abundant material for estimating the kind of way in which the formal type developed.

Agamemnon has captured Troy, and is soon to return in triumph. The anxious talk of the chorus foreshadows his fall. Pride is to be the sin which heralds his catastrophe, but the temptation is to be intimately connected with his wealth. That is why it is so natural for the chorus, when they sing of his moral peril, to speak of the modest mean[7]. Agamemnon is a conqueror and a king. Therefore he possesses in excess the two proverbial elements of 'happiness,' Wealth and Praise. Notice in passing that these two elements are already made especially appropriate

[1] I 98. [2] I 99. [3] I 118. [4] I 122. [5] VI 89–90.
[6] *Classical Quarterly* 1916. [7] *Ag.* 385.

to kings by Homer[1]. Agamemnon's anxious subjects combine the two sources of peril:

> The man of mere success,
> Luck's thriver in defect of righteousness[2],

that is to say, one who gains his gain unjustly is brought low in the end. Then immediately follows: 'To be too well spoken of—that also is an evil.'

The herald who arrives before his master fits the thought to Agamemnon when he speaks of him as 'happy...and of all men now alive most worthy to be honoured[3].' For himself he illustrates by his piety the modest mean. His speech, tragic in effect, in spite of all his efforts at cheerfulness, may be summed up in the formulae: 'On the whole the gain exceeds the loss,' and 'No mortal man is altogether free from sorrow throughout all his life.' The chorus once more elaborate the theme of riches and their danger, and once more we hear the *motif* of praise and riches, when they speak of 'the power of wealth, like coin made current by the false stamp of the world's applause[4].'

When Agamemnon at length appears, the chorus warn him against false praise, showing their own loyalty by reminding him of their past candour in criticism[5]. The flattering temptress Clytaemnestra fastens upon him the title 'Happy,' makes him accept the rôle of 'Master,' loads him with praise, induces him to make an arrogant display of wealth and to assume honours which put him on the level of the gods. We watch him as he walks to meet his death in the very moment of his sin. Immediately the

[1] *Od.* I 392 *οὐ μὲν γάρ τι κακὸν βασιλεύεμεν· αἶψα δέ οἱ δῶ | ἀφνειὸν πέλεται καὶ τιμηέστερος αὐτός.*

[2] *Ag.* 385 (Headlam). [3] *Ag.* 535.

[4] In illustration of this last phrase Headlam refers to a passage in Plato's *Laws* (870) which is so relevant to the *Oedipus* that I will venture to quote it here. Whence, it is asked, come murders? The answer is: 'Desire is the cause, ruling as mistress of a soul which is made savage by its lust. And this occurs especially in that sphere in which is found the strongest and most commonly prevalent of most men's desires—I mean the mighty power of riches, which breeds in men innumerable passionate desires for unbounded, never satisfied, possession, because of men's natural dispositions and because of their evil lack of education. The cause of their lack of education is the way in which Greeks and barbarians alike are wont to talk of wealth, the evil way in which they praise it. They esteem it as the first of human goods....A man who is to be happy must not seek to be rich, but to be rich with justice and with moderation.'

[5] The tyrant, we remember, fails to distinguish between candid friends and flatterers.

chorus sing again. And the song is not merely concerned with pride but also with the danger of great possessions, the safety of the mean (990).

The motive of the usurping Aegisthus, a tyrant in fact as in name (if we are unprejudiced we shall admit that the word has an evil sound in 1354, 1364, 1633), is vengeance, certainly, but also gain. Clytaemnestra, sick with her killing, tragically declares that for the future she desires no more than a modest portion in life (1575) but the bully and coward for whom she has worked holds very different language: with his ill-gotten riches he will crush the opponents of his usurpation (1638)[1].

Agamemnon is no tyrant. He is a great king, ruling by right divine. In his success ruin comes to him, first as the fruit of the crime of Aulis, then as the answer to the pride which made him behave as if he were a god. The association of these themes, however, with the temptations of excessive wealth helps us to realise how the popular notions crystallised into the regular type of the 'bad king.' Aeschylus is consciously comparing Agamemnon the sacker of Troy with those of his own contemporaries who had helped to overthrow the insolence and riches of the Persian only to fall themselves under the sway of gold and pride. But the ideas are older than the application, and the tragic value of the gold of the *Persae*, for example, is based on popular reminiscences of the fatal wealth of ancient Troy. When the scattered notions have been gathered up by theorists and fashioned into the image of the typical tyrant, the gold which ruined Priam and Agamemnon and Pausanias is not forgotten. Similarly, when the tyrant becomes a type, he is always unable to tell friend from foe. Agamemnon, who is not a typical tyrant, is vainly warned by the chorus of the need for such discrimination, and the fact is significant for those who are trying to trace the development from the popular notions to the type. Need I point out that in the *Oedipus* the scene with Creon derives significance from the thought that tyrants do not recognise their sincerest friends?

In the *Choephoroe* the recovery of the stolen property is for Orestes one powerful motive, stressed in a manner perhaps dis-

[1] At Clytaemnestra's speech we remember the triumphant and ostentatious sacrifices of the usurper in Hom. *Od.* III 273 ff.

quieting to a modern reader, but true enough to human nature. The usurping adulterer has many of the traits which later go to make up the tyrant type. Instead of the old reverent awe of the city for its excellent princes, 'fear' and 'constraint,' the chorus tell us, now prevail. The themes of greed for possession, bloody violence, sexual lust, and suppression of free speech, are all here waiting to be incorporated as part of the formal type. In 780 ff. we have a prayer for the success of Orestes. It takes the form of praise for the due mean in mind and in estate, combined with the appeal to the gods of wealth at Delphi to see that the usurped 'gain' (κέρδος) be given back into the rightful owner's hands. Then in the *Eumenides* Orestes is tried for the righteous crime of mother-murder. What place has talk of 'unjust gain' when sins so much more appalling are our theme? Well, when the Furies protest that to acquit the matricide will imply a moral revolution (494), sweeping away that due fear of the consequence of sin, and that due sense of man's insignificance wherein lies 'true advantage,' they elaborate thus their praise of the modest mean:

(529) Neither the life that is ungoverned shalt thou approve, nor the life that is ridden by a master. God hath granted to the Mean that it prevail in all....In very truth as Insolence is surely the child of Impiousness, so it is from Healthfulness of mind [*i.e.* Sophrosyne, 'knowing oneself'] that the true Prosperity (ὄλβος), which all men love and pray for, springs. Here is the whole conclusion : Reverence the Altar of Justice. Do not raise your godless foot to do it injury, *because you see some gain to be won.*

Then, later in the same ode, we have:

(552) He that is just, so far as his free will can go, apart[1] from some overmastering constraint, shall not be without prosperity, and altogether ruined he shall never be. But the perverse and obdurate, who, transgressing, gathers in from every side the spoils, confused, unjustly, to his ship of fortune,...is sailing to a storm of calamity and to final ruin.

They are moved to this lofty strain, let me remind you, by the matricide of Orestes, not by theft or greed. Why, then, this stress upon unlawful gains? This theme found its place in the *Agamemnon*, though Agamemnon sins and falls through pride and his daughter's sacrifice, rather than through greed of gold. In the *Choephoroe* it recurs, and is made directly relevant by the usurper's greed. Finally it reappears in the *Eumenides*, when we

[1] For ἄτερ in this sense cf. *Ag.* 1146 Headlam. Also, I suspect, *Antigone* 4. The sense is parallel to the ἑκών of Simonides, pages xxix ff.

are absorbed by the problem of the matricide. Why? We may answer, it is true, that Agamemnon is too much set on riches, and that the Furies have some excuse for hinting that Orestes profits by the murder. But the recurrent stressing of the theme is too marked to be accounted for in this way. The reason for the insistence is, I hope, by this time obvious. Every man longs for wealth, and if you are lucky and get it, you long for more. Therefore a sinful king is normally and habitually treated as one who 'gains his gain at the expense of justice.'

The general idea which dictates the detail of the tyrant-formula is simply, as I have said, the notion that a tyrant is a bad man who is prosperous and powerful. The *Tyrannis* is regarded as 'the last and worst Injustice,' the *ἐσχάτη ἀδικία*. But for a Greek the word *ἀδικία* suggests more than the word Injustice normally suggests to us. All 'wrongs,' against whomsoever they be committed, may be included under this one head. As an ancient formulator of popular ethics who lived long after Sophocles informs us ([Aristotle] *de Vint. et Vit.* 7), *ἀδικία* may fall into any one of three main classes, Impiety, the wronging of the gods (*ἀσέβεια*), Violence, the injuring of another's person (*ὕβρις*), and Greed, the grasping of another's property (*πλεονεξία*). Of course the tyrant-formula, not by any process of deliberate analysis, but through the unconscious and natural working of the popular ideas, includes all three forms of Injustice. The tyrant is normally sacrilegious. Oedipus, of course, is not. Yet his treatment of the prophet makes the chorus fear for him that he is a man who may, in spite of his good past, turn out in the end to be a tyrant, one 'who honours not the gods enshrined.' The tyrant commits every sort of wrong against the persons of his subjects. Normally he seizes the sons and daughters of the citizens, and makes them the instrument of his sexual lawlessness. Oedipus is no such scoundrel. Yet the talk of incest has disturbed the chorus. Is it possible that Oedipus may, after all, some day prove to be a man who, like the tyrant, 'touches things untouchable'? Finally the tyrant, of course, governs for his own profit, seeks his gain by all means, fair and foul. Oedipus, we know, and the chorus have long believed it, is essentially a good king, governing for the good of others, prizing only the gains that are justly won. Yet the chorus have seen how, like a tyrant, he

has turned against his loyal friend. They have heard Creon's appeal for justice with its contrast between kingship and the gains that are really gains. At the climax of the quarrel between Oedipus and his loyal counsellor, they have heard from the lips of the king words which imply that, like a tyrant, he is determined to maintain his rule, by justice or injustice[1], 'wise for his own interest[2],' treating the city as his own possession[3]. Is it surprising that they wonder whether, after all, the king is becoming a tyrant—one who 'refuses to gain his gains by justice'?

Do you still think the phrase unsuitable? Perhaps you have not noticed how the thought is related to the composition of the drama as a whole? When Teiresias, the representative of the divine foreknowledge, first appears before the human reader of riddles, whose wisdom is so great and yet so small, he speaks, not only of himself, but also, for the audience, most significantly, of Oedipus:

> Ah me! It is but sorrow to be wise
> Where wisdom profits not.

The king, you will remember, thinks that the prophet has 'an eye for nothing but his gain,' and is corrupted by his jealousy of a rival's greater wisdom. The audience knows well that the wisdom 'which profits a man' is the wisdom of Sophrosyne. That wisdom, as we shall see, the king will learn, and will teach us also, through his tragedy. Accordingly, when Creon is confronted by the overweening claims and threats of the suspicious king, it is for a warning to Oedipus, not only as a frigid 'argument from the probabilities,' that he contrasts the gains which are really gains with the fears and glories of a royal throne. Those fears and glories none, he says, will passionately desire 'who knows Sophrosyne.'

[1] 628. [2] 630. [3] 626.

CHAPTER IV

SOPHROSYNE

THE last scenes of the *Oedipus* are sometimes described as 'ruthless,' 'harsh,' and even 'for a modern audience, intolerable.' It is thought that in this, his greatest tragedy, the poet has not allowed that relaxation of the strained emotions which in most Greek tragedies gives quietness, instead of horror, at the end. In Paris, let me admit, the poet has not been so grossly misunderstood. The finished art of M. Mounet-Sully triumphed here as throughout the play. The effect was terrible and passionate, but also, as it should be, beautiful. Yet a Greek performance must have been even more restrained. The scene was composed for music. The cries of Oedipus are rhythmical, and were meant to be sung, not screamed or shouted. As the first transport of his passion leaves him, the rhythm becomes less violent, though from time to time the memory of the wrong that he has suffered and inflicted stirs him to a fiercer outburst of bitterness. At length the thought runs clearer, and the verse falls into the regular beat of the iambic. The self-respect, so generous and so dignified, with which the hero greets the coming of Creon, shows us that in him nobility can triumph over pain and even over degradation: and the man who at such a time can lavish all his anxiety and love upon the children, who are the symbols of his tragedy, is greatest in his greatest affliction.

Yet I think that many readers must have thought the words with which Oedipus takes leave of his children very strange and cold. I will quote Professor Murray's version, not because it is worse, but because it is better, than most. Nearly all editors agree with his interpretation[1], though few of them could present the words in a form which so little jarred upon the ear.

[1] Jebb, Wilamowitz, Bruhn, accept the same reading, which they translate with a more literal accuracy, but with less poetical tact.

If your age could understand,
Children, full many counsels I could give.
But now I leave this one word: Pray to live
As life may suffer you, and find a road
To travel easier than your father trod.

CREON

Enough thy heart hath poured its tears; now back into thy house repair.

This is Jebb's version:

To you, my children, I would have given much counsel were your minds mature; but now I would have this to be your prayer—that ye live where occasion suffers, and that the life which is your portion may be happier than your sire's.

Is it possible that Oedipus bids his children pray 'to live where occasion suffers'? Has he no better prayer for them than this...that they may take life as it comes?

Even if we are blind to the dramatic ineptitude, we ought to know that to a Greek ear such a prayer would sound very nearly impious. The fortune for which a pious Greek should pray is not to live 'where occasion suffers,' 'where opportunity allows,' but to possess 'a modest measure of good,' enough yet not too much, and a good enjoyment thereof, with the modest good sense which alone makes such enjoyment possible. And that, in fact, is what Oedipus means. An unlucky emendation, and a foggy notion that *καιρός* generally means 'opportunity,' have made the editors spoil the perfect gentleness of the concluding scene. The simple phrase 'to live where the Due Measure is' has associations for Greek ears which we must learn if we are to understand. Oedipus was great, and wise, and fortunate. In his calamity he has now learnt that the best is found not in greatness but in quiet happiness, not in riches but in sufficiency, not in genius but in sweet reasonableness. Happiness comes not by riches and power, not by good luck and opportunity. And for a Greek this thought is expressed by the words which are inscribed on the temple of the Delphic Apollo, the presiding divinity of our play, '*Nothing too much.*'

The prayer which Oedipus would teach his children has had a history as august as its meaning is profound. It was not invented by Sophocles, and it is still used to-day. It is the prayer for *Sophrosyne*—for a modest measure of prosperity and for the right mind without which true happiness is not to be won. When

Juvenal, in words which are so familiar that we have forgotten their meaning, bids his reader pray

ut sit mens sana in corpore sano,

he repeats a lesson which has come to Rome from the Stoics. But the Stoics learnt it from the ancient religion of Delphi. The Christian prayer which speaks of 'health in mind, body, and estate' is a repetition of the pagan prayer for modesty of mind, wherein lie safety and content, for strength of body sufficient yet not excessive[1], and for a modest competence of material wealth.

It is because such thoughts as these are at once suggested by the word *καιρός* to the Athenian mind that the last scene is invested with a beauty which, without hiding any tragic issue, seems to heal the wounds that the tragedy has made. The short trochaic dialogue which leads to the final moral recalls theme after theme of the earlier drama, and for each theme suggests the final word of wisdom. Then, at length, the chorus[2] state the lesson of his tragedy[3]:

> Dwellers in our native Thebes, behold, this is Oedipus, who knew the famed riddles, and was a man most mighty; on whose fortunes what citizen did not gaze with envy? Behold into what a storm of dread trouble he hath come!
>
> Therefore, while our eyes wait to see the destined final day, we must call no one happy, who is of mortal race, until he hath crossed life's border, free from pain.

Nothing is here of guilt. The moral is simple and based on truth. Oedipus was happy, and is now unhappy...therefore let us remember of what sort is the life of man.

The full beauty of this conclusion can only be appreciated by a modern reader if he will consent to study the associations

[1] This *motif* is suggested by the vigour and pride of the victorious athlete. Its application in tragedy is connected with Heracles, whom his great strength of body could not save from calamity. See my remarks on Euripides *Hercules Furens*, *Classical Quarterly* 1916.

[2] It is distressing to find that this speech has been suspected on the ground that the sentiment is 'weak' after the stronger declaration of the chorus in 1187. The truth is not 'weaker' than the half-truth. At line 864 ff. the chorus state a moral theory which does not really fit the case of Oedipus. After the disastrous revelation they come nearer to the truth, but exaggerate. Now at the end we hear the exact truth.

[3] I quote Jebb's version, from which I differ in unimportant details.

normally connected with the two maxims 'Measure is best' and 'Call no man happy before the end.' Notice, first, that the two are not felt as separate and disconnected. Oedipus has at the end, in a higher sense than in his tragic discovery, learnt to 'know himself.' The Delphic temple had two inscriptions for the edification of the worshipper. One was the negative 'Nothing Too Much,' the other was positive, but closely akin to the first: 'Know thyself.' That meant for Oedipus the tragic discovery of his pollution. It means also this: 'Know that thou art but a man, the creature of a day: and, knowing this, be modest and be prudent. Remember that the greatest gift of the gods is not cleverness nor power nor wealth nor fame, but the spirit of Sophrosyne.' Now Sophrosyne is the spirit of the man who knows that he is mortal, and in all things shuns excess. This doctrine, though its proverbial form is popularly associated with Solon, is really one of those pieces of ancient wisdom 'whose begetting no man knows,' attributed to Solon as a typical wise man. His verse, as every Athenian knew, is full of the spirit of the doctrine. Though the story of his meeting with Croesus is imaginary, it will be worth our while to recall the account given by Herodotus of the famous interview. Herodotus was a friend of Sophocles, and in spirit his tale of Croesus has affinities with the Sophoclean point of view. Of course the tone of his anecdote, as becomes a story which gathers a happy company in the market-place, is far from tragedy[1].

Croesus, the king of Lydia, conquered many nations, and was very rich: when his prosperity was at its height all the sages of Greece came, one after another, to visit his court, among them Solon, the wise Athenian lawgiver. When Solon had seen the palace and the treasures, their greatness and magnificence, then Croesus asked: 'Stranger of Athens, we have heard much of your wisdom and of your travel through many lands from love of knowledge and a wish to see the world. I am curious, therefore, to enquire of you, whom, of all the men that you have seen, you deem the most happy?' This he said because he thought himself the happiest of mortals: but Solon answered him without flattery, according to the truth. 'The happiest was an humble Athenian, who saw his city prosper, and his sons' sons grow up beautiful

[1] Hdt. 1 30 ff.

and good. His good fortune lasted till his death, for he died fighting in battle for his city. And next were two young athletes of Argos, who had bodily strength and a sufficient livelihood: they died, when their mother moved by their filial piety had prayed the gods to give them the best of their gifts[1].'

Then Croesus broke in angrily: 'What, Stranger of Athens, is my happiness nothing to you? Do you not set me even on a level with these commoners?' 'Croesus,' replied the other, 'you put a question on man's life to one who knows that the power above is full of jealousy[2] and wont to trouble our lot. A long life gives one to witness much and experience much that one would not choose. Seventy years I set as the limit of man's life.... Twenty-six thousand two hundred and fifty days, of which not one but will produce events unlike the rest.... You, Croesus, you I see are wonderfully rich, and are the master of many nations: but for your question I have no answer to give, until I hear that you have closed your life in happiness.... For he who is greatly rich is not at all more happy than he who has enough for the day's need, unless the fortune that goes with him to the end be this—to make a good end, still possessing all his good. Many that are very rich are unhappy, and many that have a modest competence are lucky.... He who unites the greatest number of advantages and retaining them to the day of his death, then dies peaceably, that man alone, O King, is in my judgment worthy to bear the name of happy. In every matter it behoves us to mark well the end. Often God gives men but a gleam of happiness, then plunges them into ruin.'

Soon after, Croesus suffered a great calamity, 'sent to punish him, it is likely, because he thought himself the happiest of men.' The tale is no idle anecdote. Croesus, the first oriental monarch who 'subdued some Greeks and made alliance with others' (1 6), is the prototype of Cyrus, of Cambyses, of Dareius, and, above all, of Xerxes himself. This fact gives unity to the historian's compilation. Throughout the work we are reminded that the real

[1] In Herodotus, as in Sophocles, the maxim that none should be called happy till his death is combined with praise of the Modest Measure. The Athenian Tellos, whose happiness lasted till his death, was also 'well off *according to Athenian standards*' (τοῦ βίου εὖ ἥκοντι ὡς τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν) and the happy Argive lads possessed 'a competency for their livelihood' (βίος ἀρκέων).

[2] This element hardly appears in Sophocles.

advantage lies with men of modest life and modest means. The rich and grasping conqueror is brought low because he lacks *Sophrosyne*. When at last, against his better judgment, the wise counsellor of Xerxes makes an end of warnings, and assents to the fatal expedition against Greece, we think again of Solon[1]:

> O King, I, being but a man, and one that has already seen many and great things brought low by lesser things, was not willing to allow you to yield to every impulse of your youth; knowing that to desire overmuch is evil; remembering the expedition of Cyrus against the Massagetae, how it fared; remembering also the enterprise of Cambyses against the Aethiops, yes, and myself a soldier with Dareius against the Scythians. Knowing these things, I made it my design that you, in unambitious quietness, should earn the name of happy from all mankind. But, as it is....

It would be a pleasant task to show in detail how the pages of Herodotus are crowded with allusions to this doctrine and how detail after detail illustrates the *Oedipus*. It is not only characteristic of the art of Herodotus, but also relevant to our study of Sophocles, that Croesus, when he has learnt his lesson, speaks of Solon as a man so wise 'I would relinquish a great fortune to have him brought to converse with all the kings of the world.' As Solon was to Croesus, so was Croesus to Cyrus and Cambyses, and so was Artabanus to Dareius and Xerxes. May we not add, so also is Creon to Oedipus?

But Herodotus did not invent these notions. Aeschylus himself had used them in the very form in which they are attributed to Solon. Clytaemnestra, the incarnate Temptation (Πειθώ), is urging her victorious husband to make an ostentatious use of riches and to take to himself honours properly belonging to the gods. At first he refuses, but his refusal, as Walter Headlam pointed out, is the refusal of a weak man, pouring out a string of moralities which come from the tongue, not from the heart. Among them is our proverb, duly coupled with the praise of the modest mind[2]:

> Let your homage
> Yield to me not the measure of a God,
> But of a man....
> A modest mind's the greatest gift of Heaven,
> The name felicity's to keep till men
> Have made an end in blessing.

[1] VII 18. [2] 915–920 Headlam.

In the final struggle the temptress presses her advantage. Just before her victim yields, she gives him, and he virtually accepts, the fatal title of 'happy.'

According to Jebb, the maxim 'call no man happy till the end' appears as a set *γνώμη* for the first time in this passage of the *Agamemnon*. It is more important to observe that here already it appears as a perfectly trite and familiar adage. Unless we realise that a Greek audience is already well aware of the connection between this doctrine of the uncertain future and the need for moderation, we shall not understand the earliest of all extant Greek tragedies, the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus. When the daughters of Danaus are violently asserting their determination never to submit to the embraces of their cousins, they are reminded of this doctrine by their more gentle handmaidens. They protest against the suggestion that they may some day yield. 'You are trying,' they cry, 'to persuade one that is not to be persuaded.' The answer is: 'And you...you know not the future.' Forced to admit that they are indeed unable to foresee the issues of the 'unfathomed mind' of Zeus, they are bidden 'Therefore let your prayer be one of moderation.' This means that they ought not to make arrogant assertions, but rather to pray that, if it be the will of Zeus—the sequel shows it is not—they may escape. 'What is this Measure,' they reply, 'that you are fain to teach me?' The answer is: 'Observe the rule of No Excess concerning all that depends upon the will of heaven.' Here also, though the application is different, we have all the elements which are combined in the close of the *Oedipus*—the contrast between human ignorance and the knowledge of the gods, the insistence upon the uncertainty of the future, the Measure (*καιρός*) and the modest prayer[1].

Go back some generations from these Amazons of Aeschylus, and listen to the songs which Spartan maidens sang before the drill-sergeant had changed their country's soul. You will hear notes of the same old strain, though the allusions are made with so delicate a grace that I fear the commentators have not always appreciated their point. The girls for whom Alcman made his Partheneion have been singing of the wicked ambition and the ruin of certain heroes, who aspired to marriage with the im-

[1] Aeschylus *Supplices* ad fin.

mortals—for excess in matters of Aphrodite, and the desire to make great marriages, are among the many forms assumed by the tendency of mortal men to 'think thoughts that are above mortality[1].' This is how they moralise their story before they turn to lighter themes:

> The gods avenge: and happy he
> Who weaves in cheerful piety
> His day, without a tear[2].

The desire of the maidens is for the cheerful heart that comes only from Sophrosyne. They contrast it with the wanton violence of the ruined heroes. The delightful sequel, in which they fall into two companies, praise their respective leaders, and profess to be scornful of the charms of their companions, is an illustration of the 'pious cheerfulness' of which they have sung.

It is indeed the choral lyric, and especially the epinician odes of Bacchylides and Pindar, that can best teach us both the familiarity of these *motifs* and their special relevance to Oedipus. But, unfortunately, of all Greek poems the epinician odes are to most modern readers the most obscure. To his contemporaries Pindar was a delight: to modern schoolboys he is—it must be confessed—a burden. The reason is not simply that we find his rhythms or his syntax difficult, nor simply that we miss the dance and the music which were meant to accompany his odes. The chief cause is that we have to read him to discover the ideas which his audience already knew by heart. He has a message only for those who know, before he speaks, the doctrine that he is to preach. When he talks of his words 'having a message only for the intelligent,' he is flattering his audience: of course they understand quite easily. But we, who have to deduce from his words, not only the name and parentage of his patron, but also, often, the nature of the athletic victory that he is celebrating, the circumstances of his performance, the legends to which he alludes, the very morality which he takes for granted, and which forms

[1] Cf. Pindar *Pyth.* II 27 Διὸς ἄκοιτιν ἐπειρᾶτο, χρὴ δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν αἰεὶ παντὸς ὁρᾶν μέτρον. The καιρός in Love *fr.* 123, 127, *Nem.* VIII 4 f.

[2] Alcman *Parthen.* 36 ff. ὁ δ' ὄλβιος ὅστις εὔφρων ἀμέραν διαπλέκει ἄκλαυστος. The word εὔφρων implies both a cheerful and a 'right' mind. The word ἄκλαυστος corresponds to the final μηδὲν ἀλγεινὸν παθών of the *Oedipus*, and is different from εὔφρων, since it implies freedom from calamity. I have discussed the rest of this delightful poem in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway* pp. 124 ff.

his raw material, may be forgiven if we think that he is boasting of his own obscurity. When he talks of the swiftness and the ease with which he flies, like a bee or an eagle, from theme to theme, and when he poses as the natural poet who flings out at random all the wealth of poetry which throngs into his mind, some of us are foolish enough to believe him. In fact, he is of all poets most deliberate and most ingenious in his arrangement of material. But it is only if, like his audience, we know the normal and familiar connections of proverb with proverb and of fact with illustration, that we shall perceive the art which with a mock ingenuousness he disclaims. His poems have been compared to elaborate embroideries, whose design is not at first sight obvious. To his audience the design was obvious, because the stuff of the embroidery was familiar, and because the simpler patterns, out of which the intricate device was made, were commonplaces. The same remarks apply to Bacchylides, though his pattern is somewhat simpler. As illustration I will take his third poem, which depends for its effect upon the familiarity of the audience with the story of Croesus and of Solon's good advice. I suspect that an unprejudiced reader, if he were to struggle unassisted with, for instance, Jebb's translation, would decide that this poem is a jerky, ill-constructed, rather nonsensical effusion. Be that as it may, I venture to make a fresh attempt at translation, because I believe that, in the light of our discussion, even the imperfections of my version will not conceal the balanced beauty of the composition. Even apart from the poetical value of the work, it is worth while to consider it at this point of our enquiry, because it treats the doctrine of Due Measure and the maxim of Solon in their special application to the fortunes of a despotic king. It will, I hope, help us to realise how suitable it is that the moral should be applied by Sophocles to Oedipus.

The poet's object is to conceal the flattery of his patron in a cloak of moral advice.

Hiero, despot of Syracuse, has won a victory at Olympia with the four-horsed chariot. The race is one of great importance, which kings and nobles are particularly proud to win, because it implies not only their interest in athletic prowess but also their lavish expenditure, and, consequently, their great wealth. An Olympian victor is in any case a favourite of fortune, and if he is

also a king—well, his fortune is such that a poet who celebrates it is expected to wrap his praise in the safe moralities of 'moderation.' It is unlucky to be too lucky. The poet's task is to suggest that His Majesty is really the best and happiest of men by means of a poem which ostensibly warns him against excess, and congratulates him on being, 'so far as a mortal can be, and should desire to be,' fortunate.

Bacchylides, developing perhaps a hint from Pindar, accomplishes his delicate task by a very happy comparison of Hiero to Croesus. The unity of the poem depends on our knowledge—Bacchylides is too good a courtier to make his point directly—that Croesus was actually, unlike Hiero, doomed to lose his throne. In the version of the myth which is chosen by Bacchylides for his purpose the Lydian monarch is carried off by Apollo, as a reward for piety, to the happy country of the Hyperboreans. Yet everyone in the audience, including the delighted Hiero, knows perfectly well that the fall of Croesus is a gentle warning against excessive confidence in good luck. In Herodotus we have a different version of his later career. He is kept alive in order to accompany Cambyses, as the incarnate warning against the excesses which bring that unhappy monarch to his doom.

The poem opens thus:

> Sing, Muse of Fame, the praise of Demeter, Queen of rich-fruited Sicily, and of her daughter, the Maiden violet-crowned, and of Hiero's swift steeds that ran at Olympia. Victory and Splendour went with them, as they rushed to the goal by the broad torrent of Alpheus, where they made the son of Deinomenes Happy—made him winner of the crown!
>
> And a cry went up from the multitude of the people: 'All Hail, Thrice Happy!'...Zeus hath bestowed on him the greatest sway and princedom in all Greece, yet hath he wisdom and keeps not the high-built fabric of his wealth veiled from the world in curtains of darkness. The temples are populous with his feast and sacrifice. The ways of the city are thronged by his hospitable entertainment. Brightly gleams and flashes the gold of the high and wondrous tripods he hath set before the shrine, where the Delphians by Castalia's fountain serve the great sanctuary of Apollo! 'Tis on the god that men should spend their splendour. In such spending lie the riches that are best.

Praise can rise no higher. To call a man Thrice Happy is even dangerous. We know, of course, that an exhortation to modesty must follow. So the king is told that it is not enough to have

riches: he must know how to use his riches well. While the poet preaches, he still flatters. Hiero needs no reminder: who can doubt that Hiero has already learnt the pious use of wealth, when he sees the golden tripods that the king has dedicated at Delphi?

The sequel has been sadly misunderstood. The mention of the Delphic tripods marks a transition—surely, not, as Jebb says, 'inartistic'—to the theme of Croesus, who also honoured Apollo. The story of his prosperity and fall has warning as well as comfort for the aged Hiero. Croesus, because he was rich, had thought himself the happiest of men. But presently calamity came. That is what Bacchylides hints, though he tells us of the happier aspect of the end. Since Croesus was pious and generous, therefore, although he fell, he was not utterly overwhelmed. Hiero, of course, is generous as Croesus, and more modest. He may reasonably hope for heaven's continued favour, though not even he may hope for perfect happiness.

Hiero, theme of men's praise, none shall be found, of all that dwell in Hellas, to boast that he hath given more gold to Loxias than thou. All men, save he whose pride is fed by envy, may praise thee, the warrior hero, that delightest in horses, wielder of a sceptre given by Zeus the god of justice, sharer in the delights of the dark-tressed Muses...and may call thee one that is at peace with the gods.

Notice in passing that the stress falls on *θεοφιλῆ*, which is ambiguous, and implies both piety and its reward. Troubles, the poet adds, must come, like sudden tempests. But Hiero, unlike Croesus, will be safe:

Your eyes are fixed on the Modest Mean (*καίρια σκοπεῖς*)! Our life is short, uncertain; and a cheat is hope, who steals into the hearts of men, the creatures of a day. Aye, as the King Apollo, when he was an humble shepherd, said to Admetus: 'Two thoughts there are, which, being mortal, you should cherish. Think ever of the morrow as the last day you will see. Imagine also that fifty years of opulent life are yours. In taking your delight, therefore, remember piety. In piety lie the gains that are the highest.'

My words are understood of one that is wise. Only the depths of the divine Aether remain ever unpolluted. Only the waters of Ocean are always pure. Gold is indeed a delight[1], but remember that a man may not pass be-

[1] A misunderstanding of the final clauses, where the stress is on piety, not on delight, has led Jebb into serious error in his interpretation of this and the following passage. He asserts that Bacchylides by a 'lapse' in his rhetoric has called gold a 'delight' when he should have called it a 'delight for ever.' If he had so called it, he would have been as foolish and as impious as an oriental tyrant!

yond old age and hoary hairs and bring again his youth. Yet one thing fades not as the body fails—the light of good deeds lives.

That is the moral. Gold is corruptible. In nature only the bright aether[1] and the purifying waters of eternal seas, and in man only virtue and the praise of virtue, are beyond the power of change. Therefore, though we take our delight, let it be ever with piety and remembrance of our littleness.

In his first *Pythian*, composed two years before this poem, Pindar himself had compared Hiero for his munificence to Croesus. Here also you will find that an artistic unity is given to an intricate pattern by the subtle association of the warning and the flattery with themes that are important in the *Oedipus*. Two *motifs*, wealth and reputation, predominate. This is the conclusion which sums up the artistic whole:

That a man's fortune be good is the first of prizes: the second portion of happiness is to be well spoken of. If any man meet both these goods and have them for his possession, he hath the highest crown of life.

The implication is that by winning his race—again with the four-horsed chariot—Hiero has shown his wealth and won good fortune; and that through the poetry of Pindar he wins the second portion, fame. As usual, the final reflection has a reference to the opening notes of the poem. The 'praise' won by Hiero at the end corresponds to the music of Apollo's lyre, which is a delight to the gods and all their friends, and a source of terror to the enemies of the gods and of Hiero! The good fortune which on this occasion is celebrated by the lyre of Pindar, Apollo's representative, includes not only the winning of a race at Pytho, but also the throne of Syracuse, the victory of Himera, the foundation of Aetna. Just as Bacchylides flatters Hiero by representing him as one of the rightful (Homeric) kings who derive their power from Zeus, so Pindar is praising Hiero as king, not tyrant, when he talks of the good old Dorian institutions of Aetna, and of the respect paid by the despot to 'the people.' The highest compliment of all is implied by the statement that the enemies of Zeus, particularly Typhon, the giant who is crushed beneath the weight of Aetna's mountain, are put to confusion by the music of Apollo. The subtle flatterer suggests that Hiero, who is now the theme

[1] The element in which are born those laws of purity of which our chorus sings at line 867.

of Apollo's music, is among men as Zeus among the gods: the enemies of Hiero hate the sound of his praise, and will be duly crushed as are the enemies of Zeus.

When the praise has reached its height, we duly hear of human limitations. Excess in praise must be avoided. The poet's boast of skill introduces the theme of 'Modest Measure.' God's favour is the condition of success, for poet as for king. The poet will not exaggerate his praise though he will surpass all rivals. So subtly are we led to the theme of Hiero's Limitations. 'Possessions...yes, a crown of wealth...but also troubles! Let us hope that, like Philoctetes of old, our hero will rise superior to all detraction, and, in spite of the limitations of human happiness, live on the whole in joy.' 'May the god raise up his fortunes, and give him a due measure of his desires[1].' It is in harmony with this thought that the poet speaks of the due measure of praise, and of the envy which is brought by excess of praise. The moral is: 'Be generous as you are: be not deceived by the cunning temptation of sordid gain.' The reference which follows to Croesus and to Phalaris, though it certainly flatters Hiero, who is no tyrant, but the father of his people, no niggard, but a lavish spender, hints again at the theme of moderation in ambition and enjoyment.

We, also, must avoid excess, and must not become entangled in an analysis, however fascinating, of the whole of Pindar's work. We must return from our excursion into the realm of lyric, and consider again, in the light of all that we have seen, the final movement of our play.

Listen once more to the prayer which Oedipus would have his children learn:

> Children, out of much
> I might have taught you, could you understand,
> Take this one counsel: be your prayer to live
> Where fortune's modest measure is, a life
> That shall be better than your father's was.

Then hear how Creon, taking up the theme of moderation, breaks the silence:

> It is enough! Go in! Shed no more tears but go!

[1] *ὧν ἔραται καιρόν*: not 'opportunity' but 'the due measure.'

OEDIPUS
I would not, yet must yield.
CREON
Measure in all is best.

The pathos of the immediate connection is, I hope, obvious. But for a Greek audience, and for us, if we have rightly understood the tragedy, there is a special appropriateness in this plea for measure in the expression of the hero's grief. Sophrosyne requires, not only that a man be modest in good fortune, but also that he bear, with a courage which does not too much complain, the ills that are inevitable. At the outset Oedipus appealed for the courage of his people[1]. When he was filled with false suspicions and false fears he lacked Sophrosyne[2]. In his first wild agony, which was 'an anguish more than man could bear[3],' he fell into excess, inflicting on himself

Fresh, not unpurposed evil....'Tis the woe
That we ourselves have compassed hurts the most[4].

As reason came again he sought, at first, to justify the act. But for the chorus, as for the audience, it was a transgression of Sophrosyne. Now the first agony has given place to pity for his children and to modest self-reproach. The effect upon a Greek audience first of the prayer for modest means and then of the appeal for fortitude we also shall understand if we will turn to the *Oedipus at Colonus*, and listen to the words of the king who once gave courage to suppliants. He is now himself a suppliant[5]:

My child, Antigone—I am old and blind—
What country's this? Who are its citizens?
Tell me! For this day's need with some poor gift
Who shall receive the vagrant Oedipus,
One that asks little, and must ever have

[1] See line 11 note.
[2] See lines 914 ff.: notice ἄγαν.
[3] Line 1293.
[4] Lines 1230 f.
[5] *O.C.* 1 ff. Here τέκνον recalls the first words of the *O.T.* and τίνας heightens the effect of the reminiscence and contrast. The ὦ τέκνον of line 9 has an effect like the repeated τέκνα of *O.T.* 6. τὸν πλανήτην Οἰδίπουν recalls ὁ πᾶσι κλεινὸς Οἰδίπους, and στέργειν recalls στέρξαντες. Similarly *O.C.* 12–13 recall *O.T.* 216 ff., and depend for their pathos on the memory of the king who wished to be master in all things. The grammatically irregular πυθοίμεθα of *O.C.* 11 (Brunck πυθώμεθα) is possibly to be defended as a reminiscence of *O.T.* 71. In the later play, though Oedipus has no hesitation in asserting that the involuntary evils were πεπονθότα μᾶλλον ἢ δεδρακότα (267), he recognises that his passion ran to excess in the sequel (438). This fact has a bearing on our discussion in chapter II.

Less than that little—yet is satisfied:
Because long time's companionship and grief,
And his own honour, teach him fortitude?

At the words *πάντα γὰρ καιρῷ καλά* there is a moment's silence. Then Oedipus speaks again:

Know you the pledge I crave?

CREON

Speak it, and I shall know.

OEDIPUS

This: that you banish me!

CREON

That is the god's to give.

OEDIPUS

The gods reject me!

CREON

Then, perchance, you shall have banishment.

OEDIPUS

You promise?

CREON

Knowing not, 'tis not my wont to speak.

The refusal of Creon to promise that the king shall have his wish and be sent into banishment has been strangely regarded as a sign of harshness. The best answer to that misunderstanding will be found in the words of Oedipus at line 1444, when the boon of exile is for the first time asked and, on the same ground as here, refused.

What? Will you ask for one so lost as I?

CREON

Surely...and you will now believe the god[1].

In these lines in which for the second time the request is made, and for the second time the decision is left for the god, two *motifs*, of great importance in the earlier scenes, are lightly recalled and linked with the final doctrine of Sophrosyne. Oedipus had been wise and confident in the wisdom which has proved to

[1] The implied rebuke is gentle: the tone of Oedipus expresses only his sense of the magnanimity of Creon. Instead of trying to interpret Creon's prudence as a foreshadowing of the cold cynicism which belongs to the Creon of the *Oedipus Coloneus*, we shall do well to notice how in the later play the *motif* of line 1444 is recalled. See *O.C.* 299 f. Notice in that context that *O.C.* 308 recalls the entry of Creon at *O. T.* 80, and the words of Oedipus at 1478. Theseus, not Creon, in the later play is the representative of the modest mean, a ruler who 'knows that he is but man' 567: that fact, and the other reminiscences, make *O.C.* 575 significant.

be but folly. Now, in a matter where it seems as if no doubt can remain, the cautious Creon, remembering how ignorant is man, insists that the god alone can pronounce the verdict. Although that verdict seems to be implied by the terms of the earlier oracle, until the obvious interpretation of that oracle is confirmed by the god himself, Creon will not utter any word even of a conditional promise. We are thus reminded, first of the great contrast between human ignorance and the divine foreknowledge, then of the human need for modest measure in speech. Those are the main themes of the scene with Teiresias[1], which began with the words:

> Ah me! It is but sorrow to be wise
> Where wisdom profits not,

and in which Teiresias gave the warning:

> 'Tis that I see thy own word quit the path
> Of safety, and I would not follow thee.

We remember also how the chorus sang:

> The only Wise, Zeus and Apollo, know
> Truth and the way of man,

and how Oedipus cried, when first the truth began to appear:

> I fear myself, dear wife: I fear that I
> Have said too much.

It is, then, the Sophrosyne which recognises the limitation of human knowledge, and the modesty in speech which comes from that Sophrosyne, that give value to lines 1517–1520. Oedipus, who set himself above the wisdom of the prophet, must learn the highest wisdom—the recognition of his own ignorance. Oedipus whose words have so often missed 'the *καιρός*' must learn 'to be silent where he does not know.' The theme is a commonplace: the tragic beauty of the application is new. If you think my interpretation over-subtle, look first at the opening words of the *Septem contra Thebas*:

> He who controls the act
> Must speak well-measured words[2]:

[1] Lines 316 *φρονεῖν*, 324 *οὐδὲ σοὶ τὸ σὸν φώνημ' ἰὸν πρὸς Καιρόν*, 499, 767.

[2] Aesch. *Sept.* 1; see above, p. xix. This phrase is recalled with a characteristic application by Euripides *Phoen.* 871, where Mr Pearson's note recognises the fact that *καιρός* is not temporal.

then turn, if you will, to the *Oedipus Coloneus*, and notice how this *motif*, like the rest, is recalled in the first scene:

> The man is present: speak whate'er the time
> And the due measure bid you[1],

and judge with what effect this maxim was hurled back upon the changed and hypocritical Creon of that play[2].

In the *Oedipus Tyrannus* Creon stands for pious moderation. His insistence that the hero should observe due measure even in the expression of his grief is a fitting close to the scene which opened with a storm of violence and shame and self-mutilation: and it may help us to appreciate the purpose of the poet's distinction between the inevitable tragedy and the self-inflicted wrong.

Due measure, Creon implies, is best in all things. Therefore, being man, admit your ignorance; and, where you are most certain, doubt. The gods alone are wise.

That is the fitting close to the debate of riddles, oracles and prophecies: and it may help us to appreciate the purpose of the conflict of Teiresias and Oedipus.

Due measure is best in all things. Therefore set a watch upon your speech. Speak not upon conjecture, but with proof. Reason and yield to reason—not to anger. Boast not. Remember, being mortal, that you know not what the issue of your words may be.

That is the fitting close to a drama which, above all Greek dramas, is charged with tragic irony. It may help us to appreciate the contrast between the sober colouring of the dialogue and the elaboration of the odes in which the oracles of Phoebus are so swift and terrible.

Oedipus is ready to go. But his tragedy is not yet fully accomplished. He must relinquish his children. Gently, though with a certain sternness, Creon bids him let them go. With a flash of his old imperiousness, Oedipus protests. Again there comes the reminder of due measure:

> OEDIPUS
> Then take me...take me hence!
> CREON
> So....Quit your children....Come!

[1] *O.C.* 31 f. [2] *O.C.* 808 f.

OEDIPUS
I will not let them go!
CREON
Seek not the Mastery
In all. Too brief, alas! have proved your masteries.

That also is a fitting close to a theme which has been prominent in the play. After the scene with Teiresias, in which the wise man showed his folly, there came another scene in which the king forgot the limitation of his rightful power. That scene has been said to flag. It did not flag for a Greek who knew the value of his freedom and could recognise in tyranny a mortal sin against the state. When Oedipus passed from false suspicion to contempt of argument, spurning the true friend who would remind him of the 'gain that is really gain,' when he forgot that royalty is government for the good of all the state, and claimed at length to be sole Master of his Thebes—well, he forgot 'due measure.' The 'gain that is really gain' is called Sophrosyne.

Once more the close may help us to appreciate the play. The mastery of Zeus alone is everlasting. The scene with Creon and the 'tyrant chorus,' on which we have already spent so many words, are relevant and even necessary. As is the wisdom of the gods to man's highest flight of wit, so is the eternal sway of Zeus to man's most stubborn mastery. Not only must the wisdom of Teiresias be set against the folly of the famous answerer of riddles, but also the modest loyalty of Creon must be contrasted with the arrogance of him who was himself, let us not forget, the loyal servant and the saviour of the state.

One last word remains. As we listen to the final exhortation:

> Look, ye who dwell in Thebes. This man was Oedipus,
> That mighty king, who knew the riddle's mystery,

we are, I hope, too deeply moved to notice that the poet has now joined together the theme of wisdom and the theme of power. But without the artistry that has made this connection the poet could not have so strangely moved us. The third line adds a theme, perhaps the most universal of the *motifs* that Sophrosyne suggests, the theme of Luck. A prudent and a pious man is modest and remembers his mortality when Fortune seems most kind. Above all men Oedipus seemed Lucky. As Teiresias hinted, the chance which seemed to bring him every human good

was fatal in the end. Now, when we hear how he was one

> Whom all the city envied, Fortune's favourite[1]

and how his present ruin should teach us to remember our mortality, we shall understand at length the full significance of the pious words with which the priest of Zeus addressed the wielder of an earthly sceptre:

> We count you not a god, I and these children,
> That thus we seek your hearth. Of human kind
> We count you first in the common accident
> Of fate; in the traffic of the gods with man
> Greatest of men.

The temptation of the lucky man is to forget in his prosperity that fortune ever changes. The temptation of the man whom all men honour is to think himself more than human, to count himself the equal of the gods.

Jocasta trusted to her luck. She prayed, and when, as it appeared, a happy answer came to her request, forgot to thank the gods. Instead she thought the lucky chance disproved their oracles. And so she said to Oedipus:

> Why, what should a man fear? Luck governs all!
> There's no foreknowledge and no providence!
> Take life at random.

She forgot that if Luck governs, caution bids us never trust her favours. Immediately—not because she had so spoken, but with a tragedy more wonderful because of her great confidence—Jocasta learnt the truth.

Presently Oedipus proclaims himself the son of Luck. He calls the months his kinsmen, because they also are the children of changing Luck. He who was once a foundling is now a mighty king. As the months wax to greatness, so has he grown to eminence. His Mother Luck has given him good gifts. So he is confident. He has forgotten that moons must wane; that the gifts of Luck, lavished in one brief moment, in a brief moment also are taken away. Therefore with confidence he cried:

> Break what break will! My will shall be to see
> My origin, however mean!

The chorus also have forgotten. They hail the omen of the moon. To-morrow, as they say, will see the moon at the full. To-

[1] I venture to give a version which is not quite literal, in order to call attention to the effect, which is clear in Greek.

morrow Oedipus shall be hailed as greater than the first of men. He shall be known as son of Pan or Dionysus or Apollo.

Then comes the revelation:

> So from these twain hath evil broken: so
> Are wife and husband mingled in one woe.
> Justly their ancient happiness was known
> For happiness indeed; and lo! to-day—
> Tears and Disasters, Death and Shame, and all
> The Ills the world hath names for—all are here.

That tragic series, also, finds its just and beautiful conclusion in our final harmony. Pindar, who has already taught us so much, will illustrate once more the close relation of the doctrine of the mean to the reminder that a man must not be counted equal with the gods. 'Oh Saviour Zeus,' he cries, 'I come to thee as a suppliant, and pray thee to adorn this city with the glory of manly prowess: aye, and I pray also that my patron, to-day's Olympian victor, may continue on his way, delighting still in the horses that Poseidon loves, and may so win an old age of cheerfulness even to the end, with sons to stand at his side and support his age. For if a man's prosperity flourish in wholesome manner, if in his possession he have a sufficiency and add thereto good fame—let him not seek to be a god[1].' You will find the same themes developed in the earliest of Pindar's extant odes[2], where the text is one that we shall not now, I hope, fail to understand: 'If Lacedaemon is happy, Thessaly is blest. What bids me thus transgress the measure in my praise?' When you turn to the sixth *Nemean*, with its magnificent comparison of the changes of human fortune to the rise and fall of cities and to the changing seasons of our mother Earth, you will better understand how a Greek audience felt when Oedipus proclaimed his kinship with the waxing months: and when you turn to the fresh treatment of the same theme in the eleventh *Nemean*, you will realise that all this is only another way of expressing the final moral of our play.

The last words bid us apply to our own hearts the lesson of

[1] Pindar *Ol.* v 20 ff. This is exactly *οὐ καιρός, ἀεὶ ζῆν*: the prayer is the same: and the spirit of Sophrosyne which prompts it is expressed by the proverbial: 'Seek not to be a god.' Remember how the Athenian of Solon's apologue was happy to the end, because his city prospered and his sons' sons grew up beautiful and good and he was well off 'according to Athenian standards.'

[2] *Pythian* x.

Sophrosyne. We are not asked to think: 'How satisfactory, how salutary, that sin is always justly punished!' Nor are we left to useless railing at a world in which such wanton havoc may overtake men's lives. Sophrosyne will not save us from calamity. Yet, if calamity comes, we may remember to bear it well and bravely, not adding to inevitable ill 'fresh, not unpurposed evils.' Sophrosyne will not enable us to answer all the riddles of our life, though it will certainly not absolve us from the need and obligation of the search. But it may help us to remember that wisdom was not born, and will not die with us: it may save us from that strange conceit of knowledge which is the greatest error of the men the world calls wise. Finally, Sophrosyne will not ensure success in business, politics or art: nor will it exempt us from the service of the state. It will remind us that, whether we are in authority or under authority, we are only part of a life that was, before we were born, and will be, when we are forgotten. It will keep us mindful of the uncertainty of riches, and of the truth that a modest competence is often better than great wealth. It will not deny the value of good fame and knowledge, wealth and influence: that also would be a transgression of the mean. But it may remind us to prize most the 'gains that are really gains,' the cheerfulness and loyal friendship which are more pleasant and more easily won than luxury or power.

For, in spite of all, there remains in Oedipus the nobility of the human spirit. It is not without a quickened sense of human values that we hear the words:

> Behold, in the event, the storm of his calamities.
> And, being mortal, think on that last day of death,
> Which all must see: and speak of no man's happiness
> Till without sorrow he hath passed the goal of life.

ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΣ

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ.

Ὦ ΤΕΚΝΑ, Κάδμου τοῦ πάλαι νέα τροφή,
τίνας ποθ' ἕδρας τάσδε μοι θοάζετε
ἱκτηρίοις κλάδοισιν ἐξεστεμμένοι;
πόλις δ' ὁμοῦ μὲν θυμιαμάτων γέμει,
ὁμοῦ δὲ παιάνων τε καὶ στεναγμάτων·
ἀγὼ δικαιῶν μὴ παρ' ἀγγέλων, τέκνα,
ἄλλων ἀκούειν αὐτὸς ὧδ' ἐλήλυθα,
ὁ πᾶσι κλεινὸς Οἰδίπους καλούμενος.
ἀλλ', ὦ γεραιέ, φράζ', ἐπεὶ πρέπων ἔφυς
πρὸ τῶνδε φωνεῖν, τίνι τρόπῳ καθέστατε,
δείσαντες ἢ στέρξαντες; ὡς θέλοντος ἂν
ἐμοῦ προσαρκεῖν πᾶν· δυσάλγητος γὰρ ἂν
εἴην τοιάνδε μὴ οὐ κατοικτίρων ἕδραν.

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ.

ἀλλ', ὦ κρατύνων Οἰδίπους χώρας ἐμῆς,
ὁρᾷς μὲν ἡμᾶς ἡλίκοι προσήμεθα
βωμοῖσι τοῖς σοῖς, οἱ μὲν οὐδέπω μακρὰν
πτέσθαι σθένοντες, οἱ δὲ σὺν γήρᾳ βαρεῖς,
ἱερῆς, ἐγὼ μὲν Ζηνός, οἵδε τ' ἠθέων
λεκτοί· τὸ δ' ἄλλο φῦλον ἐξεστεμμένον
ἀγοραῖσι θακεῖ, πρός τε Παλλάδος διπλοῖς
ναοῖς, ἐπ' Ἰσμηνοῦ τε μαντείᾳ σποδῷ.
πόλις γάρ, ὥσπερ καὐτὸς εἰσορᾷς, ἄγαν
ἤδη σαλεύει κἀνακουφίσαι κάρα
βυθῶν ἔτ' οὐχ οἵα τε φοινίου σάλου,
φθίνουσα μὲν κάλυξιν ἐγκάρποις χθονός,
φθίνουσα δ' ἀγέλαις βουνόμοις τόκοισί τε

OEDIPUS.

My children, sons of Cadmus and his care,
Why thus, in suppliant session, with the boughs
Enwreathed for prayer, throng you about my feet,
While Thebes is filled with incense, filled with hymns
To the Healer, Phoebus, and with lamentation?—
Whereof I would not hear the tale, my children,
From other lips than yours. Look! I am here,
I, whom men call 'the All-Famous Oedipus!'
Tell me, old priest, you who by age are fit
To speak for these, in what mood stand ye here—
Of panic—or good courage? Speak! For I,
You know, would give all aid. Hard were my heart,
Pitying not such a petitioning.

A PRIEST.

King, Master of my country, Oedipus,
You see us, in our several ages, ranged
About your altars. Some are not yet fledged
For long flight, others old and bowed with years,
Priests—I of Zeus—and, yonder, of our youth
A chosen band. Thebes, garlanded for prayer,
Sits in the markets, at the shrines of Pallas,
And by Ismenus' oracle of fire.
With your own eyes you see, the storm is grown
Too strong, and Thebes can no more lift her head
Out of the waves, clear from the surge of death.
A blight is on her budding fruit, a blight
On pastured cattle, and the barren pangs

ἀγόνοις γυναικῶν· ἐν δ' ὁ πυρφόρος θεὸς
σκήψας ἐλαύνει, λοιμὸς ἔχθιστος, πόλιν,
ὑφ' οὗ κενοῦται δῶμα Καδμεῖον· μέλας δ'
Ἅιδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται.
θεοῖσι μέν νυν οὐκ ἰσούμενόν σ' ἐγὼ
οὐδ' οἵδε παῖδες ἑζόμεσθ' ἐφέστιοι,
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου
κρίνοντες ἔν τε δαιμόνων συναλλαγαῖς·
ὅς γ' ἐξέλυσας, ἄστυ Καδμεῖον μολών,
σκληρᾶς ἀοιδοῦ δασμὸν ὃν παρείχομεν·
καὶ ταῦθ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν οὐδὲν ἐξειδὼς πλέον
οὐδ' ἐκδιδαχθείς, ἀλλὰ προσθήκῃ θεοῦ
λέγει νομίζει θ' ἡμὶν ὀρθῶσαι βίον·
νῦν τ', ὦ κράτιστον πᾶσιν Οἰδίπου κάρα,
ἱκετεύομέν σε πάντες οἵδε πρόστροποι
ἀλκήν τιν' εὑρεῖν ἡμίν, εἴτε του θεῶν
φήμην ἀκούσας εἴτ' ἀπ' ἀνδρὸς οἶσθά που·
ὡς τοῖσιν ἐμπείροισι καὶ τὰς ξυμφορὰς
ζώσας ὁρῶ μάλιστα τῶν βουλευμάτων.
ἴθ', ὦ βροτῶν ἄριστ', ἀνόρθωσον πόλιν·
ἴθ', εὐλαβήθηθ'· ὡς σὲ νῦν μὲν ἥδε γῆ
σωτῆρα κλῄζει τῆς πάρος προθυμίας·
ἀρχῆς δὲ τῆς σῆς μηδαμῶς μεμνώμεθα
στάντες τ' ἐς ὀρθὸν καὶ πεσόντες ὕστερον,
ἀλλ' ἀσφαλείᾳ τήνδ' ἀνόρθωσον πόλιν.
ὄρνιθι γὰρ καὶ τὴν τότ' αἰσίῳ τύχην
παρέσχες ἡμῖν, καὶ τανῦν ἴσος γενοῦ.
ὡς εἴπερ ἄρξεις τῆσδε γῆς, ὥσπερ κρατεῖς,
ξὺν ἀνδράσιν κάλλιον ἢ κενῆς κρατεῖν·
ὡς οὐδέν ἐστιν οὔτε πύργος οὔτε ναῦς
ἔρημος ἀνδρῶν μὴ ξυνοικούντων ἔσω.

ΟΙ. ὦ παῖδες οἰκτροί, γνωτὰ κοὐκ ἄγνωτά μοι
προσήλθεθ' ἱμείροντες· εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι

Of women: and the fiery fever-god
Hath struck his blow—Pestilence sweeps the city,
Empties the house of Cadmus and makes rich
With tears and wailings the black house of Death.
We count you not a god, I and these children,
That thus we seek your hearth. Of human kind
We judge you first in the common accident
Of fate; in the traffic of the gods with man
Greatest of men;—who came to Cadmus' town
And loosed the knot and quit us of the toll
To that grim singer paid. No hint from us,
No schooling, your own wit, touched by some god,
Men say and think, raised us and gave us life.
So now, great Oedipus, mighty in the world,
We stand and pray. If you have any knowledge
From god or man, find help! The tried man's thought,
And his alone, springs to the live event!
Oh, noblest among men, raise up our state!
Oh, have a care! To-day for that past zeal
Our country calls you Saviour. Shall your sway
Be thus remembered—that you raised us high
Only to fall? Not so! Lift up our state
Securely, not to fall. With promise good
You brought us Fortune. Be the same to-day!
Would you be Prince, as you are Master, here?
Better to master men than empty walls.
The desolate ship is nothing, ramparts nothing,
Deserted, with no men to people them.

OE. Alas, my sons! I know with what desire
You seek me. Well I know the hurt whereby

νοσεῖτε πάντες, καὶ νοσοῦντες, ὡς ἐγὼ
οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῶν ὅστις ἐξ ἴσου νοσεῖ.
τὸ μὲν γὰρ ὑμῶν ἄλγος εἰς ἕν' ἔρχεται
μόνον καθ' αὑτόν, κοὐδέν' ἄλλον· ἡ δ' ἐμὴ
ψυχὴ πόλιν τε κἀμὲ καὶ σ' ὁμοῦ στένει.
ὥστ' οὐχ ὕπνῳ μ' εὗδοντά γ' ἐξεγείρετε,
ἀλλ' ἴστε πολλὰ μέν με δακρύσαντα δή,
πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις.
ἣν δ' εὖ σκοπῶν ηὕρισκον ἴασιν μόνην,
ταύτην ἔπραξα· παῖδα γὰρ Μενοικέως
Κρέοντ', ἐμαυτοῦ γαμβρόν, ἐς τὰ Πυθικὰ
ἔπεμψα Φοίβου δώμαθ', ὡς πύθοιθ' ὅ τι
δρῶν ἢ τί φωνῶν τήνδε ῥυσαίμην πόλιν.
καί μ' ἡμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ
λυπεῖ τί πράσσει· τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα
ἄπεστι πλείω τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου.
ὅταν δ' ἵκηται, τηνικαῦτ' ἐγὼ κακὸς
μὴ δρῶν ἂν εἴην πάνθ' ὅσ' ἂν δηλοῖ θεός.

ΙΕ. ἀλλ' εἰς καλὸν σύ τ' εἶπας οἵδε τ' ἀρτίως
Κρέοντα προσστείχοντα σημαίνουσί μοι.

ΟΙ. ὦναξ Ἄπολλον, εἰ γὰρ ἐν τύχῃ γέ τῳ
σωτῆρι βαίᾳ λαμπρὸς ὥσπερ ὄμματι.

ΙΕ. ἀλλ' εἰκάσαι μέν, ἡδύς. οὐ γὰρ ἂν κάρα
πολυστεφὴς ὧδ' εἶρπε παγκάρπου δάφνης.

ΟΙ. τάχ' εἰσόμεσθα, ξύμμετρος γὰρ ὡς κλύειν.
ἄναξ, ἐμὸν κήδευμα, παῖ Μενοικέως,
τίν' ἡμῖν ἥκεις τοῦ θεοῦ φήμην φέρων;

ΚΡΕΩΝ.

ἐσθλήν· λέγω γὰρ καὶ τὰ δύσφορ', εἰ τύχοι
κατ' ὀρθὸν ἐξιόντα, πάντ' ἂν εὐτυχεῖν.

ΟΙ. ἔστιν δὲ ποῖον τοὔπος; οὔτε γὰρ θρασὺς
οὔτ' οὖν προδείσας εἰμὶ τῷ γε νῦν λόγῳ.

You all are stricken—and not one of you
So far from health as I. Your several griefs
Are single and particular, but my soul
Mourns for myself, for you, and for all Thebes.
You rouse not one that sleeps. Through many tears
And many searchings on the paths of thought,
By anxious care, at last, one way of cure
I found:—and put in action....I have sent
Menoeceus' son, Creon, my own wife's brother,
To ask of Phoebus, in his Pythian shrine,
'By deed or word how shall I rescue Thebes?'
And when I mark the distance and the time,
It troubles me—what doth he? Very long—
Beyond his time, he lingers....When he comes,
Then call me base if I put not in act
What thing soever Phoebus showeth me.

PR. Good words and seasonable. In good time—
Look! my companions tell me, Creon comes!

OE. O King Apollo, as his looks are glad
So may he bring us glad and saving fortune.

PR. I think he bears us good. Else were his head
Not thus enwreathed, thick with the clustered laurel.

OE. He is in earshot. We'll not think, but know!
[*He raises his voice as Creon approaches.*
Prince, and my kinsman, son of Menoeceus, speak!
What message bring you for us from the god?

CREON.

Good news! I count all news as fortunate,
However hard, that issues forth in good.

OE. 'Tis a response that finds me undismayed,
And yet not overbold. What says the god?

ΚΡ. εἰ τῶνδε χρῄζεις πλησιαζόντων κλύειν,
ἕτοιμος εἰπεῖν, εἴτε καὶ στείχειν ἔσω.
ΟΙ. ἐς πάντας αὔδα. τῶνδε γὰρ πλέον φέρω
τὸ πένθος ἢ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.
ΚΡ. λέγοιμ' ἂν οἷ' ἤκουσα τοῦ θεοῦ πάρα.
ἄνωγεν ἡμᾶς Φοῖβος ἐμφανῶς ἄναξ
μίασμα χώρας, ὡς τεθραμμένον χθονὶ
ἐν τῇδ', ἐλαύνειν, μηδ' ἀνήκεστον τρέφειν.
ΟΙ. ποίῳ καθαρμῷ; τίς ὁ τρόπος τῆς ξυμφορᾶς;
ΚΡ. ἀνδρηλατοῦντας, ἢ φόνῳ φόνον πάλιν
λύοντας, ὡς τόδ'—αἷμα—χειμάζον πόλιν.
ΟΙ. ποίου γὰρ ἀνδρὸς τήνδε μηνύει τύχην;
ΚΡ. ἦν ἡμίν, ὦναξ, Λάϊός ποθ' ἡγεμὼν
γῆς τῆσδε, πρὶν σὲ τήνδ' ἀπευθύνειν πόλιν.
ΟΙ. ἔξοιδ' ἀκούων· οὐ γὰρ εἰσεῖδόν γέ πω.
ΚΡ. τούτου θανόντος νῦν ἐπιστέλλει σαφῶς
τοὺς αὐτοέντας χειρὶ τιμωρεῖν τινας.
ΟΙ. οἱ δ' εἰσὶ ποῦ γῆς; ποῦ τόδ' εὑρεθήσεται
ἴχνος παλαιᾶς δυστέκμαρτον αἰτίας;
ΚΡ. ἐν τῇδ' ἔφασκε γῇ. τὸ δὲ ζητούμενον
ἁλωτόν, ἐκφεύγει δὲ τἀμελούμενον.
ΟΙ. πότερα δ' ἐν οἴκοις ἢ 'ν ἀγροῖς ὁ Λάϊος
ἢ γῆς ἐπ' ἄλλης τῷδε συμπίπτει φόνῳ;
ΚΡ. θεωρός, ὡς ἔφασκεν, ἐκδημῶν, πάλιν
πρὸς οἶκον οὐκέθ' ἵκεθ' ὡς ἀπεστάλη.
ΟΙ. οὐδ' ἄγγελός τις οὐδὲ συμπράκτωρ ὁδοῦ
κατεῖδ', ὅτου τις ἐκμαθὼν ἐχρήσατ' ἄν;
ΚΡ. θνῄσκουσι γάρ, πλὴν εἷς τις, ὃς φόβῳ φυγὼν
ὧν εἶδε πλὴν ἓν οὐδὲν εἶχ' εἰδὼς φράσαι.
ΟΙ. τὸ ποῖον; ἓν γὰρ πόλλ' ἂν ἐξεύροι μαθεῖν,
ἀρχὴν βραχεῖαν εἰ λάβοιμεν ἐλπίδος.
ΚΡ. λῃστὰς ἔφασκε συντυχόντας οὐ μιᾷ
ῥώμῃ κτανεῖν νιν, ἀλλὰ σὺν πλήθει χερῶν.

CR. If you would hear now, with this company
Here present, I will speak—or go within?

OE. Speak it to all, since it is their distress
I care for—aye, more than for my own life.

CR. So be it. As I heard from the god, I speak.
Phoebus the King enjoins with clear command:—
A fell pollution, fed on Theban soil,
Ye shall drive out, nor feed it past all cure.

OE. How drive it out? In what way came misfortune?

CR. There must be banishment, or blood for blood
Be paid. 'Tis murder brings the tempest on us.

OE. Blood—for what blood? Whose fate revealeth he?

CR. My Lord, in former days, our land was ruled—
Before you governed us—by Laïus.

OE. I know—men tell me so—I never saw him.

CR. He fell. His murderers, whoe'er they be,
Apollo chargeth us to strike with vengeance.

OE. The task is hard. How can we hope to track
A crime so ancient? Where can they be found?

CR. Here, said the god, in Thebes. To seek is oft
To find—neglected, all escapes the light.

OE. Was it in Thebes, or on the countryside
Of Thebes, the King was murdered, or abroad?

CR. Abroad, on sacred mission, as he said,
He started—then, as he went, returned no more.

OE. Came none with news? Came none who journeyed with him
Back, to report, that you might learn and act?

CR. All slain....One panic-stricken fugitive
Told nought that he saw—knew nought—save one thing only.

OE. What thing? One clue, disclosing many more,
The first small promise grasped, may teach us all.

CR. Robbers, he told us, met the King and slew him—
Not just one man, but a great company.

ΟΙ. πῶς οὖν ὁ λῃστής, εἴ τι μὴ ξὺν ἀργύρῳ
ἐπράσσετ' ἐνθένδ', ἐς τόδ' ἂν τόλμης ἔβη;
ΚΡ. δοκοῦντα ταῦτ' ἦν· Λαΐου δ' ὀλωλότος
οὐδεὶς ἀρωγὸς ἐν κακοῖς ἐγίγνετο.
ΟΙ. κακὸν δὲ ποῖον ἐμποδὼν, τυραννίδος
οὕτω πεσούσης, εἶργε τοῦτ' ἐξειδέναι;
ΚΡ. ἡ ποικιλῳδὸς Σφὶγξ τὸ πρὸς ποσὶ σκοπεῖν
μεθέντας ἡμᾶς τἀφανῆ προσήγετο.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ' ἐξ ὑπαρχῆς αὖθις αὖτ' ἐγὼ φανῶ.
ἐπαξίως γὰρ Φοῖβος, ἀξίως δὲ σὺ
πρὸ τοῦ θανόντος τήνδ' ἔθεσθ' ἐπιστροφήν·
ὥστ' ἐνδίκως ὄψεσθε κἀμὲ σύμμαχον,
γῇ τῇδε τιμωροῦντα τῷ θεῷ θ' ἅμα.
ὑπὲρ γὰρ οὐχὶ τῶν ἀπωτέρω φίλων
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ τοῦτ' ἀποσκεδῶ μύσος·
ὅστις γὰρ ἦν ἐκεῖνον ὁ κτανὼν τάχ' ἂν
κἄμ' ἂν τοιαύτῃ χειρὶ τιμωρεῖν θέλοι·
κείνῳ προσαρκῶν οὖν ἐμαυτὸν ὠφελῶ.
ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα, παῖδες, ὑμεῖς μὲν βάθρων
ἵστασθε, τούσδ' ἄραντες ἱκτῆρας κλάδους,
ἄλλος δὲ Κάδμου λαὸν ὧδ' ἀθροιζέτω,
ὡς πᾶν ἐμοῦ δράσοντος· ἢ γὰρ εὐτυχεῖς
σὺν τῷ θεῷ φανούμεθ', ἢ πεπτωκότες.
ΙΕ. ὦ παῖδες, ἱστώμεσθα. τῶνδε γὰρ χάριν
καὶ δεῦρ' ἔβημεν ὧν ὅδ' ἐξαγγέλλεται.
Φοῖβος δ' ὁ πέμψας τάσδε μαντείας ἅμα
σωτήρ θ' ἵκοιτο καὶ νόσου παυστήριος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ.

στρ. α'. ὦ Διὸς ἀδυεπὲς φάτι, τίς ποτε τᾶς πολυχρύσου
2 Πυθῶνος ἀγλαὰς ἔβας
3 Θήβας; ἐκτέταμαι, φοβερὰν φρένα δείματι πάλλων,
4 ἰήιε Δάλιε Παιάν,

OE. What brought the robber...what, unless 'twas pay,...
Something contrived from Thebes!...to such a deed?
CR. Some thoughts of that there were. Yet, in our troubles,
For Laïus dead no man arose with aid.
OE. Some thoughts! For a King dead! A pressing trouble,
To put you off with less than certainty!
CR. It was the Sphinx—whose riddling song constrained us
To leave the unknown unknown, and face the present.
OE. Then I'll go back and fetch all to the light!
'Tis very just in Phoebus—and in you
'Tis a just zeal for the cause of that slain man.
And right it is in me that ye shall see me
Fighting that cause for Phoebus and for Thebes.
Not for some distant unknown friend,—myself,
For my own sake, I'll drive this evil out,
Since he that slew this King were fain perchance
Again, by the like hand, to strike...at me!
So, fighting for your king, I serve myself.
Come then, my children, lift your prayerful boughs,
And leave the altar-steps. Up! No delay!
Go, someone, gather Cadmus' people here!
I will do all. Then as the god gives aid,
We'll find Good Luck...or else calamity!
PR. Up, children, let us go! The King's own word,
You hear it, grants the boon for which we came.
Now Phoebus come, who sent the oracle,
Himself to stay the plague and save us all.

CHORUS.

Glad Message of the voice of Zeus,
From golden Pytho travelling to splendid Thebes, what burden bringest thou?
Eager, am I, afraid, heart-shaken with fear of thee—
(Healer, Apollo of Delos, God of the Cry, give ear!)

5 ἀμφὶ σοὶ ἀζόμενος τί μοι ἢ νέον
6 ἢ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις πάλιν ἐξανύσεις χρέος.
7 εἰπέ μοι, ὦ χρυσέας τέκνον Ἐλπίδος, ἄμβροτε Φάμα.

ἀντ. α'. πρῶτά σε κεκλόμενος, θύγατερ Διός, ἄμβροτ' Ἀθάνα,
2 γαιάοχόν τ' ἀδελφεὰν
3 Ἄρτεμιν, ἃ κυκλόεντ' ἀγορᾶς θρόνον Εὔκλεα θάσσει,
4 καὶ Φοῖβον ἑκαβόλον, ἰὼ
5 τρισσοὶ ἀλεξίμοροι προφάνητέ μοι,
6 εἴ ποτε καὶ προτέρας ἄτας ὕπερ ὀρνυμένας πόλει
7 ἠνύσατ' ἐκτοπίαν φλόγα πήματος, ἔλθετε καὶ νῦν.

στρ. β'. ὦ πόποι, ἀνάριθμα γὰρ φέρω
2 πήματα· νοσεῖ δέ μοι πρόπας στόλος, οὐδ' ἔνι φροντίδος ἔγχος
3 ᾧ τις ἀλέξεται. οὔτε γὰρ ἔκγονα
4 κλυτᾶς χθονὸς αὔξεται, οὔτε τόκοισιν
5 ἰηίων καμάτων ἀνέχουσι γυναῖκες·
6 ἄλλον δ' ἂν ἄλλῳ προσίδοις ἅπερ εὔπτερον ὄρνιν
7 κρεῖσσον ἀμαιμακέτου πυρὸς ὄρμενον
8 ἀκτὰν πρὸς ἑσπέρου θεοῦ·

ἀντ. β'. ὧν πόλις ἀνάριθμος ὄλλυται·
2 νηλέα δὲ γένεθλα πρὸς πέδῳ θαναταφόρα κεῖται ἀνοίκτως·
3 ἐν δ' ἄλοχοι πολιαί τ' ἐπὶ ματέρες
4 ἀκτὰν παρὰ βώμιον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλαι
5 λυγρῶν πόνων ἱκτῆρες ἐπιστενάχουσιν.

Shaken with reverent fear. Is it some new task to be set?
Or is it some ancient debt thou wilt sweep in the fulness of time to the payment?
Tell me thy secret, Oracle deathless, Daughter of golden Hope!

First call we on the child of Zeus,
Deathless Athene; then on her that guards our land, her Sister, Artemis,
Lady of Good Report, whose throne is our market place;
Aye, and Apollo! I cry thee, Shooter of Arrows, hear!
Three that are strong to deliver, appear! Great Fighters of Death,
Now, if in ancient times, when calamity threatened, as champions came ye
Sweeping afar the flame of affliction,—strike, as of old, to-day!

II

Alas! Alas! Beyond all reckoning
My myriad sorrows!
All my people sick to death, yet in my mind
No shaft of wit, no weapon to fight the death.
The fruits of the mighty mother Earth increase not.
Women from their tempest of cries and travail-pangs
Struggle in vain...no birth-joy followeth.
As a bird on the wing, to the west, to the coast of the sunset god
Look! 'tis the soul of the dead that flies to the dark, nay, soul upon soul,
Rushing, rushing, swifter and stronger in flight than the race of implacable fire,

Myriads, alas, beyond all reckoning,—
A city dying!
None has pity. On the ground they lie, unwept,
Spreading contagious death; and among them wives
That wail, but not for them, aye, and gray mothers
Flocking the altar with cries, now here, now there,
Shrilling their scream of prayer...for their own lives.

παιάν δὲ λάμπει στονόεσσά τε γῆρυς ὅμαυλος·
ὧν ὕπερ, ὦ χρυσέα θύγατερ Διός,
εὐῶπα πέμψον ἀλκάν·

στρ. γ'. Ἄρεά τε τὸν μαλερόν, ὃς νῦν ἄχαλκος ἀσπίδων
φλέγει με περιβόατος ἀντιάζων,
παλίσσυτον δράμημα νωτίσαι πάτρας
ἔπουρον εἴτ' ἐς μέγαν
θάλαμον Ἀμφιτρίτας
εἴτ' ἐς τὸν ἀπόξενον ὅρμον
Θρῄκιον κλύδωνα·
τελεῖ γάρ· εἴ τι νὺξ ἀφῇ,
τοῦτ' ἐπ' ἦμαρ ἔρχεται·
τόν, ὦ <τᾶν> πυρφόρων
ἀστραπᾶν κράτη νέμων,
ὦ Ζεῦ πάτερ, ὑπὸ σῷ φθίσον κεραυνῷ.

ἀντ. γ'. Λύκει' ἄναξ, τά τε σὰ χρυσοστρόφων ἀπ' ἀγκυλᾶν
βέλεα θέλοιμ' ἂν ἀδάματ' ἐνδατεῖσθαι
ἀρωγὰ προσταθέντα, τάς τε πυρφόρους
Ἀρτέμιδος αἴγλας, ξὺν αἷς
Λύκι' ὄρεα διᾴσσει·
τὸν χρυσομίτραν τε κικλήσκω,
τᾶσδ' ἐπώνυμον γᾶς,
οἰνῶπα Βάκχον εὔιον,
Μαινάδων ὁμόστολον
πελασθῆναι φλέγοντ'
ἀγλαῶπι <σύμμαχον>
πεύκᾳ πὶ τὸν ἀπότιμον ἐν θεοῖς θεόν.

And a shout goeth up to the Healer; and, cleaving the air like fire,
Flashes the Paean, above those voices that wail in their piping tune.
Rescue! Rescue! Golden One! Send us the light of thy rescuing, Daughter of Zeus!

III

Turn to flight that savage War-God, warring not with shield and spear,
But with fire he burneth when his battlecry is loud,
Turn him back and drive him with a rushing into flight,
Far away, to exile, far, far away from Thebes,
To the great sea-palace of Amphitrite,
Perchance to the waves of the Thracian sea and his own barbaric shores.
He spareth us not. Is there ought that the night has left?
Lo! Day cometh up to destroy.
King and Lord, O Zeus, of the lightning fires,
Father of all! Thine is the Might. Take up the bolt and slay!

Phoebus, King Lycean, I would see thee string thy golden bow,
Raining on the monster for our succour and defence
Shafts unconquered. I would see the flashing of the fires
From the torch of Artemis, that blazeth on the hills
When she scours her mountains of Lycia.
And another I call, the Golden-Crowned, and his name is a name of Thebes;
He is ruddy with wine, and his cry is the triumph cry,
And his train are the Maenades;—
Come, great Bacchus, come! With a splendour of light,
Blazing for us, strike at the god cursed among gods, and save!

ΟΙ. αἰτεῖς· ἃ δ' αἰτεῖς, ταῦτ' ἐὰν θέλῃς ἔπη
κλύων δέχεσθαι τῇ νόσῳ θ' ὑπηρετεῖν,
ἀλκὴν λάβοις ἂν κἀνακούφισιν κακῶν·
ἀγὼ ξένος μὲν τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐξερῶ,
ξένος δὲ τοῦ πραχθέντος· οὐ γὰρ ἂν μακρὰν
ἴχνευον αὐτός, μὴ οὐκ ἔχων τι σύμβολον.
νῦν δ', ὕστερος γὰρ ἀστὸς εἰς ἀστοὺς τελῶ,
ὑμῖν προφωνῶ πᾶσι Καδμείοις τάδε·—
ὅστις ποθ' ὑμῶν Λάϊον τὸν Λαβδάκου
κάτοιδεν ἀνδρὸς ἐκ τίνος διώλετο,
τοῦτον κελεύω πάντα σημαίνειν ἐμοί·
κεἰ μὲν φοβεῖται τοὐπίκλημ' ὑπεξελεῖν
αὐτὸς καθ' αὑτοῦ—πείσεται γὰρ ἄλλο μὲν
ἀστεργὲς οὐδέν, γῆς δ' ἄπεισιν ἀβλαβής·
εἰ δ' αὖ τις ἄλλον οἶδεν ἢ ἐξ ἄλλης χθονὸς
τὸν αὐτόχειρα, μὴ σιωπάτω· τὸ γὰρ
κέρδος τελῶ 'γὼ χἡ χάρις προσκείσεται.
εἰ δ' αὖ σιωπήσεσθε, καί τις ἢ φίλου
δείσας ἀπώσει τοὔπος ἢ χαὐτοῦ τόδε,
ἃκ τῶνδε δράσω, ταῦτα χρὴ κλύειν ἐμοῦ.
τὸν ἄνδρ' ἀπαυδῶ τοῦτον, ὅστις ἐστί, γῆς
τῆσδ', ἧς ἐγὼ κράτη τε καὶ θρόνους νέμω,
μήτ' ἐσδέχεσθαι μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινα,
μήτ' ἐν θεῶν εὐχαῖσι μήτε θύμασιν
κοινὸν ποιεῖσθαι, μήτε χέρνιβος νέμειν·
ὠθεῖν δ' ἀπ' οἴκων πάντας, ὡς μιάσματος
τοῦδ' ἡμὶν ὄντος, ὡς τὸ Πυθικὸν θεοῦ
μαντεῖον ἐξέφηνεν ἀρτίως ἐμοί.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν τοιόσδε τῷ τε δαίμονι
τῷ τ' ἀνδρὶ τῷ θανόντι σύμμαχος πέλω·
κατεύχομαι δὲ τὸν δεδρακότ', εἴτε τις
εἷς ὢν λέληθεν εἴτε πλειόνων μέτα,
κακὸν κακῶς νιν ἄμορον ἐκτρῖψαι βίον.

ΟΕ. You pray! And for your prayer...release, perchance,
And succour you shall find; if you will aid
My nursing of this malady, and attend,
Obedient, to the words which I shall speak
Touching a story strange to me. I stand
A stranger to the fact, could not have proved it,
A foreigner, with no hint to guide me to it,
Yet now, a Theban among Thebans, speak
To you, to Thebes, my solemn proclamation.
Is there among you one who knows what hand
Did murder Laïus, son of Labdacus?
That man I charge unfold the truth to me.
Say that he fear by utterance to bring
Himself in accusation...why, his payment
Shall not be harsh; he shall depart unharmed.
Doth any know another, citizen
Or stranger, guilty? Hide it not. Reward
I'll pay, and Thebes shall add her gratitude.
What! You are silent still? If any fear
For a friend or for himself, and will not speak,
Then I must play my part. Attend what follows.
This man, whoe'er he be, from all the land
Whose government and sway is mine, I make
An outlaw. None shall speak to him, no roof
Shall shelter. In your sacrifice and prayer
Give him no place, nor in drink-offerings,
But drive him out of doors...for it is he
Pollutes us, as the oracle Pythian
Of Phoebus hath to-day revealed to me.
Thus I take up my fight for the dead man's cause
And for the god, adding this malediction
Upon the secret criminal—came the blow
By one man's hand, or aid of many hands—
As was the deed, so be his life, accurst!

ἐπεύχομαι δ', οἰκοισιν εἰ ξυνέστιος
ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς γένοιτ' ἐμοῦ συνειδότος,
παθεῖν ἅπερ τοῖσδ' ἀρτίως ἠρασάμην.
ὑμῖν δὲ ταῦτα πάντ' ἐπισκήπτω τελεῖν
ὑπέρ τ' ἐμαυτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τε τῆσδέ τε
γῆς ὧδ' ἀκάρπως καθέως ἐφθαρμένης.
οὐδ' εἰ γὰρ ἦν τὸ πρᾶγμα μὴ θεήλατον,
ἀκάθαρτον ὑμᾶς εἰκὸς ἦν οὕτως ἐᾶν,
ἀνδρός γ' ἀρίστου βασιλέως τ' ὀλωλότος,
ἀλλ' ἐξερευνᾶν· νῦν δ', ἐπεὶ κυρῶ τ' ἐγὼ
ἔχων μὲν ἀρχὰς ἃς ἐκεῖνος εἶχε πρίν,
ἔχων δὲ λέκτρα καὶ γυναῖχ' ὁμόσπορον,
κοινῶν τε παίδων κοίν' ἄν, εἰ κείνῳ γένος
μὴ 'δυστύχησεν, ἦν ἂν ἐκπεφυκότα—
νῦν δ' ἐς τὸ κείνου κρᾶτ' ἐνήλαθ' ἡ τύχη...
ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ', ὡσπερεὶ τοὐμοῦ πατρός,
ὑπερμαχοῦμαι, κἀπὶ πάντ' ἀφίξομαι
ζητῶν τὸν αὐτόχειρα τοῦ φόνου λαβεῖν
τῷ Λαβδακείῳ παιδὶ Πολυδώρου τε καὶ
τοῦ πρόσθε Κάδμου τοῦ πάλαι τ' Ἀγήνορος.
καὶ ταῦτα τοῖς μὴ δρῶσιν εὔχομαι θεοὺς
μήτ' ἄροτον αὐτοῖς γῆς ἀνιέναι τινὰ
μήτ' οὖν γυναικῶν παῖδας, ἀλλὰ τῷ πότμῳ
τῷ νῦν φθερεῖσθαι κἄτι τοῦδ' ἐχθίονι·
ὑμῖν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοισι Καδμείοις, ὅσοις
τάδ' ἔστ' ἀρέσκονθ', ἥ τε σύμμαχος Δίκη
χοἱ πάντες εὖ ξυνεῖεν εἰσαεὶ θεοί.

ΧΟ. ὥσπερ μ' ἀραῖον ἔλαβες, ὦδ', ἄναξ, ἐρῶ.
οὔτ' ἔκτανον γὰρ οὔτε τὸν κτανόντ' ἔχω
δεῖξαι. τὸ δὲ ζήτημα τοῦ πέμψαντος ἦν
Φοίβου τόδ' εἰπεῖν, ὅστις εἴργασταί ποτε.

ΟΙ. δίκαι' ἔλεξας· ἀλλ' ἀναγκάσαι θεοὺς
ἂν μὴ θέλωσιν οὐδ' ἂν εἷς δύναιτ' ἀνήρ.

Further, if, with my knowledge, in my house
He harbour at my hearth, on mine own head
Fall every imprecation here pronounced.
On you I lay my charge. Observe this ban
For my sake and the god's, and for your country
Now sunk in ruin, desolate, god-forsaken.
Why—such a business, even had the gods
Not moved therein, 'twas ill to leave uncleansed.
A noble gentleman, a King had perished...
Matter enough for probing. Well, you failed.
To-day, since I am King where he was King,
The husband of his bride, from whose one womb,
Had he been blest with progeny, had sprung
Near pledges of our bond, his fruit and mine...
Not so...fell Fortune leapt upon her prey,
And slew him. Therefore I will fight for him
As for my father; face all issues; try
All means, to find the slayer, and avenge
That child of Labdacus and Polydorus,
Agenor's offspring and great Cadmus' son.
If any shirk this task, I pray the gods
Give to their land no increase, make their wives
Barren, and with the like calamities,
Nay, worse than ours to-day, so let them perish.
On you, the rest of Thebes, who make my will
Your own—may Righteousness, who fights for us,
And all the gods wait on you still with good.

CH. O King, as bound beneath thy curse I speak.
I neither slew, nor can I point to him
That slew. The quest...Apollo, He that sent
The oracle, should tell who is the man.

OE. 'Twere just. Yet lives there any man so strong,
Can force unwilling gods to do his will?

ΧΟ. τὰ δεύτερ' ἐκ τῶνδ' ἂν λέγοιμ' ἀμοὶ δοκεῖ.
ΟΙ. εἰ καὶ τρίτ' ἐστί, μὴ παρῇς τὸ μὴ οὐ φράσαι.
ΧΟ. ἄνακτ' ἄνακτι ταὔθ' ὁρῶντ' ἐπίσταμαι
μάλιστα Φοίβῳ Τειρεσίαν, παρ' οὗ τις ἂν
σκοπῶν τάδ', ὦναξ, ἐκμάθοι σαφέστατα.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν ἀργοῖς οὐδὲ τοῦτ' ἐπραξάμην.
ἔπεμψα γάρ, Κρέοντος εἰπόντος, διπλοῦς
πομπούς· πάλαι δὲ μὴ παρὼν θαυμάζεται.
ΧΟ. καὶ μὴν τά γ' ἄλλα κωφὰ καὶ παλαί' ἔπη.
ΟΙ. τὰ ποῖα ταῦτα; πάντα γὰρ σκοπῶ λόγον.
ΧΟ. θανεῖν ἐλέχθη πρός τινων ὁδοιπόρων.
ΟΙ. ἤκουσα κἀγώ· τὸν δ' ἰδόντ' οὐδεὶς ὁρᾷ.
ΧΟ. ἀλλ' εἴ τι μὲν δὴ δείματός γ' ἔχει μέρος,
τὰς σὰς ἀκούων οὐ μενεῖ τοιάσδ' ἀράς.
ΟΙ. ᾧ μή 'στι δρῶντι τάρβος, οὐδ' ἔπος φοβεῖ.
ΧΟ. ἀλλ' οὐξελέγξων αὐτὸν ἔστιν· οἵδε γὰρ
τὸν θεῖον ἤδη μάντιν ὧδ' ἄγουσιν, ᾧ
τἀληθὲς ἐμπέφυκεν ἀνθρώπων μόνῳ.
ΟΙ. ὦ πάντα νωμῶν Τειρεσία, διδακτά τε
ἄρρητά τ', οὐράνιά τε καὶ χθονοστιβῆ,
πόλιν μέν, εἰ καὶ μὴ βλέπεις, φρονεῖς δ' ὅμως
οἵᾳ νόσῳ σύνεστιν· ἧς σε προστάτην
σωτῆρά τ', ὦναξ, μοῦνον ἐξευρίσκομεν.
Φοῖβος γάρ, εἰ καὶ μὴ κλύεις τῶν ἀγγέλων,
πέμψασιν ἡμῖν ἀντέπεμψεν, ἔκλυσιν
μόνην ἂν ἐλθεῖν τοῦδε τοῦ νοσήματος,
εἰ τοὺς κτανόντας Λάϊον μαθόντες εὖ
κτείναιμεν, ἢ γῆς φυγάδας ἐκπεμψαίμεθα.
σύ νυν φθονήσας μήτ' ἀπ' οἰωνῶν φάτιν
μήτ' εἴ τιν' ἄλλην μαντικῆς ἔχεις ὁδόν,
ῥῦσαι σεαυτὸν καὶ πόλιν, ῥῦσαι δ' ἐμέ,
ῥῦσαι δὲ πᾶν μίασμα τοῦ τεθνηκότος.
ἐν σοὶ γὰρ ἐσμέν· ἄνδρα δ' ὠφελεῖν ἀφ' ὧν

CH. I think, the second best...if I may speak...
OE. Aye, if you have a third best, speak it! speak it!
CH. The great Teiresias, more than other men,
Sees as great Phoebus sees. From him, great King,
The searcher of this case were best instructed.
OE. There I have not been slothful. I have sent—
Creon advising—I have sent for him
Twice...It is very strange...Is he not yet come?
CH. Well, well. The rest's old vague unmeaning talk.
OE. What talk? What talk? I must neglect no hint.
CH. He died, they said, at the hand of travellers.
OE. I heard it too. And he that saw...none sees him!
CH. Nay, if he have the touch of fear, he'll not
Abide thy dreadful curse. He needs must speak.
OE. Phrases to frighten him that dared the doing?
CH. Yet hath he his accuser. See! They bring
The sacred prophet hither, in whose soul,
As in no other mortal's, liveth truth.
OE. Teiresias, thou that judgest all the signs
That move in heaven and earth—the secret things,
And all that men may learn—thine eyes are blind,
Yet canst thou feel our city's plight, whereof
Thou art the champion, in whom alone,
Prophet and Prince, we find our saving help!
Phoebus hath sent—perchance my messengers
Spoke not of it—this answer to our sending.
One only way brings riddance of the plague:—
To find, and kill or banish, them that killed
King Laïus. Come! Be lavish of thy skill.
By hint of birds, by all thy mantic arts,
Up! Save thyself and me, save Thebes, and heal
All the pollution of that murdered King!
See, we are in thy hands. 'Tis good to serve

ἔχοι τε καὶ δύναιτο κάλλιστος πόνων.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ.

φεῦ φεῦ, φρονεῖν ὡς δεινὸν ἔνθα μὴ τέλη
λύῃ φρονοῦντι. ταῦτα γὰρ καλῶς ἐγὼ
εἰδὼς διώλεσ'· οὐ γὰρ ἂν δεῦρ' ἱκόμην.
ΟΙ. τί δ' ἔστιν; ὡς ἄθυμος εἰσελήλυθας.
ΤΕ. ἄφες μ' ἐς οἴκους· ῥᾷστα γὰρ τὸ σόν τε σὺ
κἀγὼ διοίσω τοὐμόν, ἢν ἐμοὶ πίθῃ.
ΟΙ. οὔτ' ἔννομ' εἶπας οὔτε προσφιλῆ πόλει
τῇδ', ἥ σ' ἔθρεψε, τήνδ' ἀποστερῶν φάτιν.
ΤΕ. ὁρῶ γὰρ οὐδὲ σοὶ τὸ σὸν φώνημ' ἰὸν
πρὸς καιρόν· ὡς οὖν μηδ' ἐγὼ ταὐτὸν πάθω.
ΟΙ. μὴ πρὸς θεῶν φρονῶν γ' ἀποστραφῇς, ἐπεὶ
πάντες σε προσκυνοῦμεν οἵδ' ἱκτήριοι.
ΤΕ. πάντες γὰρ οὐ φρονεῖτ'. ἐγὼ δ' οὐ μή ποτε
τἄμ', ὡς ἂν εἴπω μὴ τὰ σ', ἐκφήνω κακά.
ΟΙ. τί φῄς; ξυνειδὼς οὐ φράσεις, ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖς
ἡμᾶς προδοῦναι καὶ καταφθεῖραι πόλιν;
ΤΕ. ἐγὼ οὔτ' ἐμαυτὸν οὔτε σ' ἀλγυνῶ. τί ταῦτ'
ἄλλως ἐλέγχεις; οὐ γὰρ ἂν πύθοιό μου.
ΟΙ. οὐκ, ὦ κακῶν κάκιστε, καὶ γὰρ ἂν πέτρου
φύσιν σύ γ' ὀργάνειας, ἐξερεῖς ποτέ,
ἀλλ' ὧδ' ἄτεγκτος κἀτελεύτητος φανεῖ;
ΤΕ. ὀργὴν ἐμέμψω τὴν ἐμήν, τὴν σὴν δ' ὁμοῦ
ναίουσαν οὐ κατεῖδες, ἀλλ' ἐμὲ ψέγεις.
ΟΙ. τίς γὰρ τοιαῦτ' ἂν οὐκ ἂν ὀργίζοιτ' ἔπη
κλύων, ἃ νῦν σὺ τήνδ' ἀτιμάζεις πόλιν;
ΤΕ. ἥξει γὰρ αὐτά, κἂν ἐγὼ σιγῇ στέγω.
ΟΙ. οὐκοῦν ἃ γ' ἥξει καὶ σὲ χρὴ λέγειν ἐμοί.
ΤΕ. οὐκ ἂν πέρα φράσαιμι. πρὸς τάδ', εἰ θέλεις,
θυμοῦ δι' ὀργῆς ἥτις ἀγριωτάτη.
ΟΙ. καὶ μὴν παρήσω γ' οὐδέν, ὡς ὀργῆς ἔχω,

Thy fellows by all means, with all thou hast.

TEIRESIAS.

Ah me! It is but sorrow to be wise
When wisdom profits not. All this I knew,
Yet missed the meaning. Else I had not come.

OE. Why, what is this? How heavily thou comest!

TE. Dismiss me home. Be ruled by me. The load
Will lighter press on thee, as mine on me.

OE. Dost thou refuse us? In thy words I find
Small love for Thebes, thy nurse, and for her law.

TE. 'Tis that I see thy own word quit the path
Of safety, and I would not follow thee.

OE. Oh, if thy wisdom knows, turn not away!
We kneel to thee. All are thy suppliants.

TE. For none of you is wise, and none shall know
From me this evil...call it mine, not thine!

OE. Thou knowest? And thou wilt not tell? Thy mind
Is set, to play us false, and ruin Thebes?

TE. I spare myself and thee. Why question me?
'Tis useless, for I will not answer thee.

OE. Not answer me! So, scoundrel!...Thou wouldst heat
A stone....Thou wilt not? Can we wring from thee
Nothing but stubborn hopeless heartlessness?

TE. My stubborn heart thou chidest, and the wrath
To which thy own is mated, canst not see.

OE. Have I no cause for anger? Who unmoved
Could brook the slight such answers put on Thebes?

TE. Though I hide all in silence, all must come.

OE. Why, if all must, more cause to tell me all.

TE. I speak no more. So, if it pleasure thee,
Rage on in the full fury of thy wrath!

OE. Aye, so I will—speak out my wrath, and spare

ἅπερ ξυνίημ᾽. ἴσθι γὰρ δοκῶν ἐμοὶ
καὶ ξυμφυτεῦσαι τοὔργον, εἰργάσθαι θ᾽, ὅσον
μὴ χερσὶ καίνων· εἰ δ᾽ ἐτύγχανες βλέπων,
καὶ τοὔργον ἂν σοῦ τοῦτ᾽ ἔφην εἶναι μόνου.
ΤΕ. ἆληθες; ἐννέπω σὲ τῷ κηρύγματι
ᾧπερ προεῖπας ἐμμένειν, κἀφ᾽ ἡμέρας
τῆς νῦν προσαυδᾶν μήτε τούσδε μήτ᾽ ἐμέ,
ὡς ὄντι γῆς τῆσδ᾽ ἀνοσίῳ μιάστορι.
ΟΙ. οὕτως ἀναιδῶς ἐξεκίνησας τόδε
τὸ ῥῆμα; καὶ ποῦ τοῦτο φεύξεσθαι δοκεῖς;
ΤΕ. πέφευγα· τἀληθὲς γὰρ ἰσχῦον τρέφω.
ΟΙ. πρὸς τοῦ διδαχθείς; οὐ γὰρ ἔκ γε τῆς τέχνης.
ΤΕ. πρὸς σοῦ· σὺ γάρ μ᾽ ἄκοντα προὐτρέψω λέγειν.
ΟΙ. ποῖον λόγον; λέγ᾽ αὖθις, ὡς μᾶλλον μάθω.
ΤΕ. οὐχὶ ξυνῆκας πρόσθεν; ἢ ᾽κπειρᾷ λέγων;
ΟΙ. οὐχ ὥστε γ᾽ εἰπεῖν γνωστόν· ἀλλ᾽ αὖθις φράσον.
ΤΕ. φονέα σέ φημι τἀνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ᾽ οὔ τι χαίρων δίς γε πημονὰς ἐρεῖς.
ΤΕ. εἶπω τι δῆτα κἄλλ᾽, ἵν᾽ ὀργίζῃ πλέον;
ΟΙ. ὅσον γε χρῄζεις· ὡς μάτην εἰρήσεται.
ΤΕ. λελῃθέναι σε φημὶ σὺν τοῖς φιλτάτοις
αἴσχισθ᾽ ὁμιλοῦντ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ὁρᾶν ἵν᾽ εἶ κακοῦ.
ΟΙ. ἦ καὶ γεγηθὼς ταῦτ᾽ ἀεὶ λέξειν δοκεῖς;
ΤΕ. εἴπερ τί γ᾽ ἐστὶ τῆς ἀληθείας σθένος.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ᾽ ἔστι, πλὴν σοί· σοὶ δὲ τοῦτ᾽ οὐκ ἔστ᾽, ἐπεὶ
τυφλὸς τά τ᾽ ὦτα τόν τε νοῦν τά τ᾽ ὄμματ᾽ εἶ.
ΤΕ. σὺ δ᾽ ἄθλιός γε ταῦτ᾽ ὀνειδίζων, ἃ σοὶ
οὐδεὶς ὃς οὐχὶ τῶνδ᾽ ὀνειδιεῖ τάχα.
ΟΙ. μιᾶς τρέφει πρὸς νυκτός, ὥστε μήτ᾽ ἐμὲ
μήτ᾽ ἄλλον, ὅστις φῶς ὁρᾷ, βλάψαι ποτ᾽ ἄν.
ΤΕ. οὐ γάρ σε μοῖρα πρός γ᾽ ἐμοῦ πεσεῖν, ἐπεὶ
ἱκανὸς Ἀπόλλων, ᾧ τάδ᾽ ἐκπρᾶξαι μέλει.
ΟΙ. Κρέοντος ἢ σοῦ ταῦτα τἀξευρήματα;

No jot of all I see. Listen! I see
In thee the plotter of the deed, in thee,
Save for the blow, the doer. Hadst thou eyes,
Then had I said—the killing too was thine.

TE. So! Is it so?—I bid thee, by the words
Of thy decree abiding, from this day
That lights thee now, speak not to these or me:
Since thou art foul, and thou pollutest Thebes.

OE. So bold, so shameless? Can you dare to launch
Such impudent malice, and still look for safety?

TE. Safe am I now. The truth in me is strong.

OE. The truth? Who taught it you? 'Twas not your art.

TE. Thyself. I would not speak. Thou madest me.

OE. Once more. What was it? I must have it plain?

TE. Spoke I not plainly? Art thou tempting me?

OE. I am not sure I took it. Speak again.

TE. Thou seekest, and thou art, the murderer!

OE. A second time that slander! You shall rue it.

TE. Shall I add more to make thee rage the more?

OE. Add all you will. Say on. 'Tis wasted breath.

TE. I tell thee, with thy dearest, knowing nought,
Thou liv'st in shame, seeing not thine own ill.

OE. You talk and talk and fear no punishment?

TE. Aye, none, if there be any strength in truth.

OE. 'Tis strong enough for all, but not for thee.
Blind eyes, blind ears, blind heart, thou hast it not.

TE. And *thou* hast...misery, this to mock in me
Which soon shall make all present mock at thee.

OE. Night, endless night is on thee. How canst thou
Hurt me or any man that sees the light?

TE. Thou art not doomed to fall by me. Apollo,
Who worketh out this end, sufficeth thee—

OE. —Creon!—Was this invention his, or thine?—

ΤΕ. Κρέων δέ σοι πῆμ᾽ οὐδέν, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς σὺ σοί.
ΟΙ. ὦ πλοῦτε καὶ τυραννὶ καὶ τέχνη τέχνης
ὑπερφέρουσα τῷ πολυζήλῳ βίῳ,
ὅσος παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ὁ φθόνος φυλάσσεται,
εἰ τῆσδέ γ᾽ ἀρχῆς οὕνεχ᾽, ἣν ἐμοὶ πόλις
δωρητόν, οὐκ αἰτητόν, εἰσεχείρισεν,
ταύτης Κρέων ὁ πιστός, οὐξ ἀρχῆς φίλος,
λάθρᾳ μ᾽ ὑπελθὼν ἐκβαλεῖν ἱμείρεται,
ὑφεὶς μάγον τοιόνδε μηχανορράφον,
δόλιον ἀγύρτην, ὅστις ἐν τοῖς κέρδεσιν
μόνον δέδορκε, τὴν τέχνην δ᾽ ἔφυ τυφλός.
ἐπεί, φέρ᾽, εἰπέ, ποῦ σὺ μάντις εἶ σαφής;
πῶς οὐχ, ὅθ᾽ ἡ ῥαψῳδὸς ἐνθάδ᾽ ἦν κύων,
ηὔδας τι τοῖσδ᾽ ἀστοῖσιν ἐκλυτήριον;
καίτοι τό γ᾽ αἴνιγμ᾽ οὐχὶ τοὐπιόντος ἦν
ἀνδρὸς διειπεῖν, ἀλλὰ μαντείας ἔδει·
ἣν οὔτ᾽ ἀπ᾽ οἰωνῶν σὺ προὐφάνης ἔχων
οὔτ᾽ ἐκ θεῶν του γνωτόν· ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ μολών,
ὁ μηδὲν εἰδὼς Οἰδίπους, ἔπαυσά νιν,
γνώμῃ κυρήσας οὐδ᾽ ἀπ᾽ οἰωνῶν μαθών·
ὃν δὴ σὺ πειρᾷς ἐκβαλεῖν, δοκῶν θρόνοις
παραστατήσειν τοῖς Κρεοντείοις πέλας.
κλαίων δοκεῖς μοι καὶ σὺ χὠ συνθεὶς τάδε
ἀγηλατήσειν· εἰ δὲ μὴ 'δόκεις γέρων
εἶναι, παθὼν ἔγνως ἂν οἷά περ φρονεῖς.
ΧΟ. ἡμῖν μὲν εἰκάζουσι καὶ τὰ τοῦδ᾽ ἔπη
ὀργῇ λελέχθαι καὶ τὰ σ᾽, Οἰδίπου, δοκεῖ.
δεῖ δ᾽ οὐ τοιούτων, ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ
μαντεῖ᾽ ἄριστα λύσομεν, τόδε σκοπεῖν.
ΤΕ. εἰ καὶ τυραννεῖς, ἐξισωτέον τὸ γοῦν
ἴσ᾽ ἀντιλέξαι· τοῦδε γὰρ κἀγὼ κρατῶ.
οὐ γάρ τι σοὶ ζῶ δοῦλος, ἀλλὰ Λοξίᾳ·
ὥστ᾽ οὐ Κρέοντος προστάτου γεγράψομαι.

ΤΕ. Nor is thy ruin Creon. 'Tis thyself!

ΟΕ. O Wealth, O Kingship and thou, gift of Wit
That conquers in life's rivalry of skill,
What hate, what envy come with you! For this,
The government, put in my hand by Thebes,
A gift I asked not,—can it be for this;
Creon, the true, Creon, so long my friend,
Can plot my overthrow, can creep and scheme
And set on me this tricking fraud, this quack,
This crafty magic-monger—quick to spy
Ill-gotten gain, but blind in prophecy.
Aye...Where have you shown skill? Come, tell me. Where?
When that fell bitch was here with riddling hymn
Why were you silent? Not one word or hint
To save this people? Why? That puzzle cried
For mantic skill, not common human wit;
And skill, as all men saw, you had it not;
No birds, no god informed you. I, the fool,
Ignorant Oedipus,—no birds to teach me—
Must come, and hit the truth, and stop the song;—
The man whom you would banish—in the thought
To make yourself a place—by Creon's throne!
You and your plotter will not find, I think,
Blood-hunting pays! You have the look of age:
Else, your own pain should teach you what you are!

ΧΟ. We think the prophet's word came but from wrath,
And, as we think, O King, from wrath thine own.
We need not this. Our need is thought, how best
Resolve the god's decree, how best fulfil it.

ΤΕ. Though thou be master, thou must brook one right's
Equality—reply! Speech yet is mine,
Since I am not thy slave, nor Creon's man
And client, but the slave of Loxias.

λέγω δ', ἐπειδὴ καὶ τυφλόν μ' ὠνείδισας·
σὺ καὶ δέδορκας κοὐ βλέπεις ἵν' εἶ κακοῦ,
οὐδ' ἔνθα ναίεις, οὐδ' ὅτων οἰκεῖς μέτα...
ἆρ' οἶσθ' ἀφ' ὧν εἶ;...καὶ λέληθας ἐχθρὸς ὢν
τοῖς σοῖσιν αὐτοῦ νέρθε κἀπὶ γῆς ἄνω,
καί σ' ἀμφιπλὴξ μητρός τε καὶ τοῦ σοῦ πατρὸς
ἐλᾷ ποτ' ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε δεινόπους ἀρά,
βλέποντα νῦν μὲν ὀρθ', ἔπειτα δὲ σκότον.
βοῆς δὲ τῆς σῆς ποῖος οὐκ ἔσται λιμήν,
ποῖος Κιθαιρὼν οὐχὶ σύμφωνος τάχα,
ὅταν καταίσθῃ τὸν ὑμέναιον, ὃν δόμοις
ἄνορμον εἰσέπλευσας, εὐπλοίας τυχών;
ἄλλων δὲ πλῆθος οὐκ ἐπαισθάνει κακῶν,
ἃ σ' ἐξισώσει σοί τε καὶ τοῖς σοῖς τέκνοις.
πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ Κρέοντα καὶ τοὐμὸν στόμα
προπηλάκιζε· σοῦ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν βροτῶν
κάκιον ὅστις ἐκτριβήσεταί ποτε.

ΟΙ. ἦ ταῦτα δῆτ' ἀνεκτὰ πρὸς τούτου κλύειν;
οὐκ εἰς ὄλεθρον; οὐχὶ θᾶσσον; οὐ πάλιν
ἄψορρος οἴκων τῶνδ' ἀποστραφεὶς ἄπει;

ΤΕ. οὐδ' ἱκόμην ἔγωγ' ἄν, εἰ σὺ μὴ 'κάλεις.

ΟΙ. οὐ γάρ τί σ' ἤδη μῶρα φωνήσοντ', ἐπεὶ
σχολῇ σ' ἂν οἴκους τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐστειλάμην.

ΤΕ. ἡμεῖς τοιοίδ' ἔφυμεν, ὡς μὲν σοὶ δοκεῖ,
μῶροι, γονεῦσι δ', οἵ σ' ἔφυσαν, ἔμφρονες.

ΟΙ. ποίοισι; μεῖνον. τίς δέ μ' ἐκφύει βροτῶν;

ΤΕ. ἥδ' ἡμέρα φύσει σε καὶ διαφθερεῖ.

ΟΙ. ὡς πάντ' ἄγαν αἰνικτὰ κἀσαφῆ λέγεις.

ΤΕ. οὔκουν σὺ ταῦτ' ἄριστος εὑρίσκειν ἔφυς;

ΟΙ. τοιαῦτ' ὀνείδιζ' οἷς ἔμ' εὑρήσεις μέγαν.

ΤΕ. αὕτη γε μέντοι σ' ἡ τύχη διώλεσεν.

ΟΙ. ἀλλ' εἰ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐξέσωσ', οὔ μοι μέλει.

ΤΕ. ἄπειμι τοίνυν· καὶ σύ, παῖ, κόμιζέ με.

I speak then. Thou hast taunted me for blind,
Thou, who hast eyes and dost not see the ill
Thou standest in, the ill that shares thy house,—
Dost know whose child thou art?—nor see that hate
Is thine from thy own kin, here and below.
Twin-scourged, a mother's Fury and thy father's,
Swift, fatal, dogging thee, shall drive thee forth,
Till thou, that seest so true, see only night,
And cry with cries that every place shall harbour,
And all Cithaeron ring them back to thee,
When thou shalt know thy Marriage...and the end
Of that blithe bridal-voyage, whose port is death!
Full many other evils that thou know'st not
Shall pull thee down from pride and level thee
With thy own brood, aye, with the thing thou art!
So then, rail on at Creon: if thou wilt,
Rail on at me who speak: yet know that thou
Must perish, and no man so terribly.

OE. Can this be borne? This, and from such as he?
Go, and destruction take thee! Hence! Away!
Quick!...Leave my house...begone the way thou camest.

TE. That way I had not come hadst thou not called me.

OE. I little thought to hear such folly; else
I had made little haste to summon thee.

TE. Such as thou say'st I am; for thee a fool,
But for thy parents that begat thee, wise.

OE. My parents! Stay! Who is my father?...Speak!

TE. This day shall give thee birth and shall destroy thee.

OE. Riddles again! All subtle and all vague!

TE. Thou can'st read riddles as none other can.

OE. Aye, taunt me there! There thou shalt find me great

TE. 'Tis just that Luck of thine hath ruined thee.

OE. What matter? I saved Thebes, and I care nothing.

TE. Then I will go. Come, lad, conduct me hence.

ΟΙ. κομιζέτω δῆθ'· ὡς παρὼν σύ γ' ἐμποδὼν
ὀχλεῖς, συθείς τ' ἂν οὐκ ἂν ἀλγύνοις πλέον.
ΤΕ. εἰπὼν ἄπειμ' ὧν οὕνεκ' ἦλθον, οὐ τὸ σὸν
δείσας πρόσωπον· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου μ' ὀλεῖς.
λέγω δέ σοι· τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον, ὃν πάλαι
ζητεῖς ἀπειλῶν κἀνακηρύσσων φόνον
τὸν Λαΐειον, οὗτός ἐστιν ἐνθάδε,
ξένος λόγῳ μέτοικος, εἶτα δ' ἐγγενὴς
φανήσεται Θηβαῖος, οὐδ' ἡσθήσεται
τῇ ξυμφορᾷ· τυφλὸς γὰρ ἐκ δεδορκότος
καὶ πτωχὸς ἀντὶ πλουσίου ξένην ἔπι
σκήπτρῳ προδεικνὺς γαῖαν ἐμπορεύσεται.
φανήσεται δὲ παισὶ τοῖς αὑτοῦ ξυνὼν
ἀδελφὸς αὐτὸς καὶ πατήρ, κἀξ ἧς ἔφυ
γυναικὸς υἱὸς καὶ πόσις, καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς
ὁμόσπορός τε καὶ φονεύς. καὶ ταῦτ' ἰὼν
εἴσω λογίζου· κἂν λάβῃς ἐψευσμένον,
φάσκειν ἔμ' ἤδη μαντικῇ μηδὲν φρονεῖν.

στρ. α'. ΧΟ. τίς ὄντιν' ἀ θεσπιέπεια Δελφὶς εἶδε πέτρα
2 ἄρρητ' ἀρρήτων τελέσαντα φοινίαισι χερσίν;
3 ὥρα νιν ἀελλάδων
4 ἵππων σθεναρώτερον
5 φυγᾷ πόδα νωμᾶν.
6 ἔνοπλος γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐπενθρώσκει
7 πυρὶ καὶ στεροπαῖς ὁ Διὸς γενέτας·
8 δειναὶ δ' ἄμ' ἕπονται
9 Κῆρες ἀναπλάκητοι.

ἀντ. α'. ἔλαμψε γὰρ τοῦ νιφόεντος ἀρτίως φανεῖσα
2 φάμα Παρνασοῦ, τὸν ἄδηλον ἄνδρα πάντ' ἰχνεύειν.
3 φοιτᾷ γὰρ ὑπ' ἀγρίαν
4 ὕλαν ἀνά τ' ἄντρα καὶ
5 πετραῖος ὁ ταῦρος,

OE. Aye. Bid him take thee hence. Here thou dost clog
And hinder—once well sped, wilt harm no more!

TE. I go, yet speak my message, fearing not
Thee and thy frown. No way canst thou destroy me.
Wherefore I tell thee...He whom thou this while
Hast sought with threatenings and with publishings
Of Laïus' murder—that same man is here,
Now called a stranger in our midst, but soon
He shall be known, a Theban born, yet find
Small pleasure in it. Blind, that once had sight,
A beggar, once so rich, in a foreign land
A wanderer, with a staff groping his way,
He shall be known—the brother of the sons
He fathered; to the woman out of whom
He sprang, both son and husband;—and the sire
Whose bed he fouled, he murdered! Get thee in,
And think, and think. Then, if thou find'st I lie,
Then say I have no wit for prophecy!

CH. Who is the man of wrong, seen by the Delphian Crag oracular?
Seen and guilty—blood on his hand—from a sin unspeakable!
Now shall he fly!
Swifter, stronger than horses of storm,
Fly! It is time!
Armed with the fire and the lightning, the Child of Zeus leapeth upon him:
After the god swarm the dreadful Fates unerring.

Swift as a flame of light, leapeth a Voice, from the snows Parnassian,
Voice of Phoebus, hunting the sinner that lurks invisible.
Lost in the wild,
Rock and forest and cavernous haunt
Rangeth the bull,

μέλεος μελέῳ ποδὶ χηρεύων,
τὰ μεσόμφαλα γᾶς ἀπονοσφίζων
μαντεῖα· τὰ δ' ἀεὶ
ζῶντα περιποτᾶται.

στρ. β'. δεινὰ μὲν οὖν, δεινὰ ταράσσει σοφὸς οἰωνοθέτας,
οὔτε δοκοῦντ' οὔτ' ἀποφάσκονθ'· ὅ τι λέξω δ' ἀπορῶ.
πέτομαι δ' ἐλπίσιν, οὔτ' ἐνθάδ' ὁρῶν οὔτ' ὀπίσω.
τί γὰρ ἢ Λαβδακίδαις [οὔτε τανῦν πω
ἢ τῷ Πολύβου νεῖκος ἔκειτ', οὔτε πάροιθέν ποτ' ἔγωγ'
ἔμαθον, πρὸς ὅτου δὴ <βασανίζων> βασάνῳ
ἐπὶ τὰν ἐπίδαμον φάτιν εἶμ' Οἰδιπόδα, Λαβδακίδαις
ἐπίκουρος ἀδήλων θανάτων.

[βροτῶν
ἀντ. β'. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν οὖν Ζεὺς ὅ τ' Ἀπόλλων ξυνετοὶ καὶ τὰ
εἰδότες· ἀνδρῶν δ' ὅτι μάντις πλέον ἢ 'γὼ φέρεται,
κρίσις οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής· σοφίᾳ δ' ἂν σοφίαν
παραμείψειεν ἀνήρ.
ἀλλ' οὔποτ' ἔγωγ' ἄν, πρὶν ἴδοιμ' ὀρθὸν ἔπος, μεμφομένων
ἂν καταφαίην.
φανερὰ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ πτερόεσσ' ἦλθε κόρα
ποτέ, καὶ σοφὸς ὤφθη βασάνῳ θ' ἁδύπολις· τῷ ἀπ' ἐμᾶς
φρενὸς οὔποτ' ὀφλήσει κακίαν.

ΚΡ. ἄνδρες πολῖται, δεῖν' ἔπη πεπυσμένος
κατηγορεῖν μου τὸν τύραννον Οἰδίπουν
πάρειμ' ἀτλητῶν. εἰ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ξυμφοραῖς
ταῖς νῦν νομίζει πρός γ' ἐμοῦ πεπονθέναι
λόγοισιν εἴτ' ἔργοισιν εἰς βλάβην φέρον,
οὔτοι βίου μοι τοῦ μακραίωνος πόθος,
φέροντι τήνδε βάξιν. οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἁπλοῦν
ἡ ζημία μοι τοῦ λόγου τούτου φέρει,
ἀλλ' ἐς μέγιστον, εἰ κακὸς μὲν ἐν πόλει,
κακὸς δὲ πρὸς σοῦ καὶ φίλων κεκλήσομαι.

Lost and alone—to escape from the words that fly, swift from Apollo's
Oracle shrine:—stinging words that swarm and die not.

The prophet wise, reader of bird and sign,
Terribly moveth me.
I cannot deny. I cannot approve. I knew not what to say.
I brood and waver. I know not the truth of the day or the morrow.
I know not any quarrel that the Labdacids have, or have ever had, with the son of Polybus,
Nor proof to make me stand against the praise men give to Oedipus,
Though I fight for the Labdacids, to avenge the King's strange death.

The only Wise, Zeus and Apollo, know
Truth and the way of man.
They know! Can a prophet know? Can a man know more than common men?
No proof is found. Yet a man may be wiser, I know, than his fellow.
Until the charge be proven good, let the world cry 'Guilty,' never will I consent with it.
We saw the maid of fatal wing: we know the helper. Wise and true
To the city of Thebes, he came. I will never call him false.

CR. Good, citizens, news of a monstrous charge
Spoken by Oedipus the King against me
Brings me indignant here. Can he believe
That I am guilty in this perilous time
Of act or word conducing to his hurt?
I care no more for life, with such a tale
Abroad—no vexing trifle, but a charge
Of great concern and import—to be called
By you, my country, and my friends, a traitor!

ΧΟ. ἀλλ' ἦλθε μὲν δὴ τοῦτο τοὔνειδος τάχ' ἂν
ὀργῇ βιασθὲν μᾶλλον ἢ γνώμῃ φρενῶν.
ΚΡ. τοὔπος δ' ἐφάνθη ταῖς ἐμαῖς γνώμαις ὅτι
πεισθεὶς ὁ μάντις τοὺς λόγους ψευδεῖς λέγοι;
ΧΟ. ηὐδᾶτο μὲν τάδ', οἶδα δ' οὐ γνώμῃ τίνι.
ΚΡ. ἐξ ὀμμάτων δ' ὀρθῶν τε κἀξ ὀρθῆς φρενὸς
κατηγορεῖτο τοὐπίκλημα τοῦτό μου;
ΧΟ. οὐκ οἶδ'· ἃ γὰρ δρῶσ' οἱ κρατοῦντες οὐχ ὁρῶ.
αὐτὸς δ' ὅδ' ἤδη δωμάτων ἔξω περᾷ.
ΟΙ. οὗτος σύ, πῶς δεῦρ' ἦλθες; ἦ τοσόνδ' ἔχεις
τόλμης πρόσωπον ὥστε τὰς ἐμὰς στέγας
ἵκου, φονεὺς ὢν τοῦδε τἀνδρὸς ἐμφανῶς
λῃστής τ' ἐναργὴς τῆς ἐμῆς τυραννίδος;
φέρ' εἰπὲ πρὸς θεῶν, δειλίαν ἢ μωρίαν
ἰδών τιν' ἔν μοι ταῦτ' ἐβουλεύσω ποεῖν;
ἢ τοὔργον ὡς οὐ γνωριοῦμί σου τόδε
δόλῳ προσέρπον ἢ οὐκ ἀλεξοίμην μαθών;
ἆρ' οὐχὶ μῶρόν ἐστι τοὐγχείρημά σου,
ἄνευ τε πλήθους καὶ φίλων τυραννίδα
θηρᾶν, ὃ πλήθει χρήμασίν θ' ἁλίσκεται;
ΚΡ. οἶσθ' ὡς πόησον; ἀντὶ τῶν εἰρημένων
ἴσ' ἀντάκουσον, κἆτα κρῖν' αὐτὸς μαθών.
ΟΙ. λέγειν σὺ δεινός, μανθάνειν δ' ἐγὼ κακὸς
σοῦ· δυσμενῆ γὰρ καὶ βαρύν σ' ηὗρηκ' ἐμοί.
ΚΡ. τοῦτ' αὐτὸ νῦν μου πρῶτ' ἄκουσον ὡς ἐρῶ.
ΟΙ. τοῦτ' αὐτὸ μή μοι φράζ', ὅπως οὐκ εἶ κακός.
ΚΡ. εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν αὐθαδίαν
εἶναί τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.
ΟΙ. εἴ τοι νομίζεις ἄνδρα συγγενῆ κακῶς
δρῶν οὐχ ὑφέξειν τὴν δίκην, οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖς.
ΚΡ. ξύμφημί σοι ταῦτ' ἔνδικ' εἰρῆσθαι. τὸ δὲ
πάθημ' ὁποῖον φῂς παθεῖν δίδασκέ με.
ΟΙ. ἔπειθες, ἢ οὐκ ἔπειθες, ὡς χρείη μ' ἐπὶ

CH. It was not reasoned judgment, but the stress,
Perhaps, of anger, forced the bitter words.
CR. So, then, the words were uttered, that I plotted
And won the seer to make his tale a lie?
CH. 'Twas spoken so. I know not with what thought.
CR. Was the mind steady, was the eye unchanged,
When the King spoke against my loyalty?
CH. I know not. What my masters do, I see not.
Look! In good time, the King himself is come!
OE. Fellow, what brings you here? Are you so bold,
Unblushingly to venture to the house
Of him you would destroy, proved murderer,
Brigand, and traitor, that would steal my throne?
Tell me, come, tell me. When you plotted this,
Seemed I a fool or coward? Did you think
I should not see the crime so cunningly
Preparing, or could see and not prevent?
What! Without friends or money did you hunt
A Kingdom? 'Twas a foolish enterprise.
Kingdoms are caught by numbers and by gold!
CR. This right I bid thee do. As thou hast spoken,
So hear me. Then, when thou hast knowledge, judge.
OE. Glib art thou...and I slow to learn—from thee,
In whom I find so harsh an enemy.
CR. This one thing first, this one thing let me say—
OE. This one thing never—that thou art not false.
CR. Nay, if you think unreasoned stubbornness
A thing to value, 'tis an evil thought.
OE. Nay, if you think to do your kinsman wrong
And scape the penalty...'tis a mad thought.
CR. Aye, true, and justly spoken. But the hurt
You think that I have done you, tell it me.
OE. Did you, or did you not, urge me 'twas best

τὸν σεμνόμαντιν ἄνδρα πέμψασθαί τινα;
ΚΡ. καὶ νῦν ἔθ' αὐτός εἰμι τῷ βουλεύματι.
ΟΙ. πόσον τιν' ἤδη δῆθ' ὁ Λάϊος χρόνον—
ΚΡ. δέδρακε ποῖον ἔργον; οὐ γὰρ ἐννοῶ.
ΟΙ. ἄφαντος ἔρρει—θανασίμῳ χειρώματι;
ΚΡ. μακροὶ παλαιοί τ' ἂν μετρηθεῖεν χρόνοι.
ΟΙ. τότ' οὖν ὁ μάντις οὗτος ἦν ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ;
ΚΡ. σοφός γ' ὁμοίως κἀξ ἴσου τιμώμενος.
ΟΙ. ἐμνήσατ' οὖν ἐμοῦ τι τῷ τότ' ἐν χρόνῳ;
ΚΡ. οὔκουν ἐμοῦ γ' ἑστῶτος οὐδαμοῦ πέλας.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔρευναν τοῦ θανόντος ἔσχετε;
ΚΡ. παρέσχομεν, πῶς δ' οὐχί; κοὐκ ἠκούσαμεν.
ΟΙ. πῶς οὖν τόθ' οὗτος ὁ σοφὸς οὐκ ηὔδα τάδε;
ΚΡ. οὐκ οἶδ'· ἐφ' οἷς γὰρ μὴ φρονῶ σιγᾶν φιλῶ.
ΟΙ. τοσόνδε γ' οἶσθα καὶ λέγοις ἂν εὖ φρονῶν.
ΚΡ. ποῖον τόδ'; εἰ γὰρ οἶδά γ', οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι.
ΟΙ. ὀθούνεκ', εἰ μὴ σοὶ ξυνῆλθε, τὰς ἐμὰς
οὐκ ἄν ποτ' εἶπε Λαΐου διαφθοράς.
ΚΡ. εἰ μὲν λέγει τάδ', αὐτὸς οἶσθ'· ἐγὼ δὲ σοῦ
μαθεῖν δικαιῶ ταὔθ' ἅπερ κἀμοῦ σὺ νῦν.
ΟΙ. ἐκμάνθαν'· οὐ γὰρ δὴ φονεὺς ἁλώσομαι.
ΚΡ. τί δῆτ'; ἀδελφὴν τὴν ἐμὴν γήμας ἔχεις;
ΟΙ. ἄρνησις οὐκ ἔνεστιν ὧν ἀνιστορεῖς.
ΚΡ. ἄρχεις δ' ἐκείνῃ ταὐτὰ γῆς, ἴσον νέμων;
ΟΙ. ἃν ᾗ θέλουσα πάντ' ἐμοῦ κομίζεται.
ΚΡ. οὔκουν ἰσοῦμαι σφῷν ἐγὼ δυοῖν τρίτος;
ΟΙ. ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ καὶ κακὸς φαίνει φίλος.
ΚΡ. οὔκ, εἰ διδοίης γ' ὡς ἐγὼ σαυτῷ λόγον.
σκέψαι δὲ τοῦτο πρῶτον, εἴ τιν' ἂν δοκεῖς
ἄρχειν ἑλέσθαι ξὺν φόβοισι μᾶλλον ἢ
ἄτρεστον εὕδοντ', εἰ τά γ' αὔθ' ἕξει κράτη.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὔτ' αὐτὸς ἱμείρων ἔφυν
τύραννος εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ τύραννα δρᾶν,

To call in his grand reverence, the prophet?

CR. Even as I first advised, so think I still.

OE. How long ago, tell me, did Laïus...

CR. What, that he did? I have not understood.

OE. Pass, by that stroke that slew him, from men's sight?

CR. 'Tis a long count of many long-sped days.

OE. This prophet—well! Was he in practice then?

CR. Honoured as now, wise as he is to-day.

OE. So? In those days spoke he at all of me?

CR. Never, when I was present, aught of thee.

OE. And did you make no question for the dead?

CR. Question, be sure, we made—but had no answer.

OE. That day this wise man did not breathe it! Why?

CR. I know not. Where I am not wise, I speak not.

OE. One thing you know.—Be wise, then, and confess it.

CR. What is it? If I know I'll not deny.

OE. Had not you been with him, he had not hinted
My name, my compassing of Laïus' fall.

CR. Doth he so? You best know. Nay, let me ask,
And do you answer, as I answered you.

OE. Ask! You will never prove me murderer!

CR. First, then:—is not your wedded wife my sister?

OE. A truth allowed and not deniable!

CR. Joint partner of your honours and your lands?

OE. Her every wish freely she has of me.

CR. Am not I third, in equal partnership?

OE. Aye, and 'tis that proves thee a traitor friend.

CR. No! Reason with thyself, as reason I,
And, first, consider—Who would be a King
That lives with terrors, when he might sleep sound,
Knowing no fear, and wield the self-same sway?
Not such an one as I. My nature craves
To live a King's life, not to be a King:—

οὔτ' ἄλλος ὅστις σωφρονεῖν ἐπίσταται.
νῦν μὲν γὰρ ἐκ σοῦ πάντ' ἄνευ φόβου φέρω,
εἰ δ' αὐτὸς ἦρχον, πολλὰ κἂν ἄκων ἔδρων.
πῶς δῆτ' ἐμοὶ τυραννὶς ἡδίων ἔχειν
ἀρχῆς ἀλύπου καὶ δυναστείας ἔφυ;
οὔπω τοσοῦτον ἠπατημένος κυρῶ
ὥστ' ἄλλα χρῄζειν ἢ τὰ σὺν κέρδει καλά.
νῦν πᾶσι χαίρω, νῦν με πᾶς ἀσπάζεται,
νῦν οἱ σέθεν χρῄζοντες ἐκκαλοῦσί με·
τὸ γὰρ τυχεῖν αὐτοῖσι πᾶν ἐνταῦθ' ἔνι.
πῶς δῆτ' ἐγὼ κεῖν' ἂν λάβοιμ' ἀφεὶς τάδε;
οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο νοῦς κακὸς καλῶς φρονῶν.
ἀλλ' οὔτ' ἐραστὴς τῆσδε τῆς γνώμης ἔφυν
οὔτ' ἂν μετ' ἄλλου δρῶντος ἂν τλαίην ποτέ.
καὶ τῶνδ' ἔλεγχον, τοῦτο μὲν Πυθὼδ' ἰὼν
πεύθου τὰ χρησθέντ' εἰ σαφῶς ἤγγειλά σοι·
τοῦτ' ἄλλ', ἐάν με τῷ τερασκόπῳ λάβῃς
κοινῇ τι βουλεύσαντα, μή μ' ἁπλῇ κτάνῃς
ψήφῳ, διπλῇ δέ, τῇ τ' ἐμῇ καὶ σῇ, λαβών.
γνώμῃ δ' ἀδήλῳ μή με χωρὶς αἰτιῶ.
οὐ γὰρ δίκαιον οὔτε τοὺς κακοὺς μάτην
χρηστοὺς νομίζειν οὔτε τοὺς χρηστοὺς κακούς.
φίλον γὰρ ἐσθλὸν ἐκβαλεῖν ἴσον λέγω
καὶ τὸν παρ' αὑτῷ βίοτον, ὃν πλεῖστον φιλεῖ.
ἀλλ' ἐν χρόνῳ γνώσει τάδ' ἀσφαλῶς, ἐπεὶ
χρόνος δίκαιον ἄνδρα δείκνυσιν μόνος,
κακὸν δὲ κἂν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ γνοίης μιᾷ.
ΧΟ. καλῶς ἔλεξεν εὐλαβουμένῳ πεσεῖν,
ἄναξ· φρονεῖν γὰρ οἱ ταχεῖς οὐκ ἀσφαλεῖς.
ΟΙ. ὅταν ταχύς τις οὐπιβουλεύων λάθρᾳ
χωρῇ, ταχὺν δεῖ κἀμὲ βουλεύειν πάλιν.
εἰ δ' ἡσυχάζων προσμενῶ, τὰ τοῦδε μὲν
πεπραγμέν' ἔσται, τἀμὰ δ' ἡμαρτημένα.

And so think all who know what Wisdom is.
Through you, all unafraid, I win my will;
To crown me were to lay constraints on me.
What can the despot's throne confer more sweet
Than peaceful sway and princely influence?
When all clean gains of honourable life
Are mine, must I 'run mad, and thirst for more?
'Good-day' cries all the world, and open-armed
Greets me! The King's own suitors call for me,
Since that way lies success! What? Leave all this,
To win that Nothing? No, Disloyalty
Were neither reason nor good policy.
My nature holds no lust for that high thought,
And loathes the man who puts that thought in act.
Thus may you prove it—go to Pytho: ask
If well and truly I have brought my message:
Or thus—discover plot or plan wherein
The seer and I joined council—I'll pronounce
The sentence, add my voice to thine, for death!
Only, on vague suspicion charge me not.
It is not fair, it is not just, for nothing
To call a true man false, a false man true!
To cast a good friend off—it is as if
You cast the very life you love away.
Well, Time shall teach you surely. For 'tis Time,
And only Time, can prove a true man's worth,
Where one short day discovers villainy!

CH. Good words, O King, for one that hath a care
To scape a fall. Hot thoughts are dangerous!

OE. Ah! Where a secret plotter to his end
Moves hot, as hotly must I counter him.
Shall I sit still and bide his time? My all
Were lost, in error mazed, and his work done.

ΚΡ. τί δῆτα χρῄζεις; ἦ με γῆς ἔξω βαλεῖν;
ΟΙ. ἥκιστα· θνῄσκειν οὐ φυγεῖν σε βούλομαι.
ΚΡ. ὡς οὐχ ὑπείξων οὐδὲ πιστεύσων λέγεις;
ΟΙ. ὅταν προδείξῃς οἷόν ἐστι τὸ φθονεῖν.
ΚΡ. οὐ γὰρ φρονοῦντά σ' εὖ βλέπω. ΟΙ. τὸ γοῦν ἐμόν.
ΚΡ. ἀλλ' ἐξ ἴσου δεῖ κἀμόν. ΟΙ. ἀλλ' ἔφυς κακός.
ΚΡ. εἰ δὲ ξυνίης μηδέν; ΟΙ. ἀρκτέον γ' ὅμως.
ΚΡ. οὔτοι κακῶς γ' ἄρχοντος. ΟΙ. ὦ πόλις πόλις.
ΚΡ. κἀμοὶ πόλεως μέτεστιν, οὐχὶ σοὶ μόνῳ.
ΧΟ. παύσασθ', ἄνακτες· καιρίαν δ' ὑμῖν ὁρῶ
τήνδ' ἐκ δόμων στείχουσαν Ἰοκάστην, μεθ' ἧς
τὸ νῦν παρεστὸς νεῖκος εὖ θέσθαι χρεών.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ.

τί τὴν ἄβουλον, ὦ ταλαίπωροι, στάσιν
γλώσσης ἐπήρασθ'; οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνεσθε, γῆς
οὕτω νοσούσης, ἴδια κινοῦντες κακά;
οὐκ εἶ σύ τ' οἶκους σύ τε, Κρέον, κατὰ στέγας,
καὶ μὴ τὸ μηδὲν ἄλγος εἰς μέγ' οἴσετε;
ΚΡ. ὅμαιμε, δεινά μ' Οἰδίπους ὁ σὸς πόσις
δυοῖν δικαιοῖ δρᾶν ἀποκρίνας κακοῖν,
ἢ γῆς ἀπῶσαι πατρίδος, ἢ κτεῖναι λαβών.
ΟΙ. ξύμφημι· δρώντα γάρ νιν, ὦ γύναι, κακῶς
εἴληφα τοὐμὸν σῶμα σὺν τέχνῃ κακῇ.
ΚΡ. μή νυν ὀναίμην, ἀλλ' ἀραῖος, εἴ σέ τι
δέδρακ', ὀλοίμην, ὧν ἐπαιτιᾷ με δρᾶν.
ΙΟ. ὦ πρὸς θεῶν πίστευσον, Οἰδίπους, τάδε,
μάλιστα μὲν τόνδ' ὅρκον αἰδεσθεὶς θεῶν,
ἔπειτα κἀμὲ τούσδε θ' οἳ πάρεισί σοι.

κομμός.

στρ. α'. ΧΟ. 1 πιθοῦ θελήσας φρονήσας τ', ἄναξ, λίσσομαι.
ΟΙ. 2 τί σοι θέλεις δῆτ' εἰκάθω;

CR. Come then. What is your will? To cast me forth...
OE. Not so! My will is death, not banishment.
CR. Still so unmoved? Can you not trust my word?
OE. No, you must prove the folly of ambition!
CR. Have *you* such wisdom?
OE. I can play my hand!
CR. But should play fair with me!...
OE. —who are so false!
CR. If you are blinded...
OE. Still I must be King!
CR. Better unkinged, than Tyrant...
OE. Thebes—my Thebes!
CR. *My* Thebes, as thine! Both are her citizens!
CH. Stop, princes! Lo! From out the palace comes
Jocasta, in your time of need. With her
The evil of this quarrel turn to good.

JOCASTA.

O foolish! foolish! Why this rioting
Of ill-conditioned words? For shame, with Thebes
So suffering, to open private sores!
Come in!...Go, Creon, home!...You must not turn
What matters nothing into a great wrong.
CR. Sister, your husband Oedipus claims right
To do me grievous wrong—his fatal choice,
To thrust me from my country, or to slay me!
OE. Aye, wife, 'tis true. I find him practising
Against my person craft and treachery.
CR. An oath! If aught in all this charge be true,
Desert me good! May my own oath destroy me!
JO. Believe, believe him, Oedipus! Respect
My prayer, and these, thy friends, that pray to thee,
And, if not these, that oath's solemnity!

I

CH. King, we are thy suppliants. Yield, be kind, be wise.
OE. What would you have me yield?

ΧΟ. 3 τὸν οὔτε πρὶν νήπιον νῦν τ᾽ ἐν ὅρκῳ μέγαν καταίδεσαι.
ΟΙ. 4 οἶσθ᾽ οὖν ἃ χρῄζεις; ΧΟ. οἶδα. ΟΙ. φράζε δὴ τί φής.
ΧΟ. 5 τὸν ἐναγῆ φίλον μηδέποτ᾽ αἰτίᾳ 656
6 σ᾽ ἐν ἀφανεῖ λόγων ἄτιμον βαλεῖν.
ΟΙ. 7 εὖ νυν ἐπίστω, ταῦθ᾽ ὅταν ζητῇς, ἐμοὶ
8 ζητῶν ὄλεθρον ἢ φυγὴν ἐκ τῆσδε γῆς.

στρ. β'. ΧΟ. 1 οὐ τὸν πάντων θεῶν θεὸν πρόμον 660
2 Ἅλιον· ἐπεὶ ἄθεος ἄφιλος ὅ τι πύματον
3 ὀλοίμαν, φρόνησιν εἰ τάνδ᾽ ἔχω.
4 ἀλλά μοι δυσμόρῳ γᾶ φθίνουσα 665
5 τρύχει ψυχάν, τάδ᾽ εἰ κακοῖς κακὰ
6 προσάψει τοῖς πάλαι τὰ πρὸς σφῷν.

ΟΙ. ὁ δ᾽ οὖν ἴτω, κεἰ χρή με παντελῶς θανεῖν, 669
ἢ γῆς ἄτιμον τῆσδ᾽ ἀπωσθῆναι βίᾳ. 670
τὸ γὰρ σόν, οὐ τὸ τοῦδ᾽, ἐποικτείρω στόμα
ἐλεινόν· οὗτος δ᾽, ἔνθ᾽ ἂν ᾖ, στυγήσεται.
ΚΡ. στυγνὸς μὲν εἴκων δῆλος εἶ, βαρὺς δ᾽, ὅταν
θυμοῦ περάσῃς. αἱ δὲ τοιαῦται φύσεις
αὑταῖς δικαίως εἰσὶν ἄλγισται φέρειν. 675
ΟΙ. οὔκουν μ᾽ ἐάσεις κἀκτὸς εἶ; ΚΡ. πορεύσομαι,
σοῦ μὲν τυχὼν ἀγνῶτος, ἐν δὲ τοῖσδ᾽ ἴσος.

ἀντ. α'. ΧΟ. 1 γύναι, τί μέλλεις κομίζειν δόμων τόνδ᾽ ἔσω; 678
ΙΟ. 2 μαθοῦσά γ᾽ ἥτις ἡ τύχη. 680
ΧΟ. 3 δόκησις ἀγνὼς λόγων ἦλθε, δάπτει δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ ᾽νδικον.
ΙΟ. 4 ἀμφοῖν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῖν; ΧΟ. ναίχι. ΙΟ. καὶ τίς ἦν λόγος;
ΧΟ. 5 ἄλις ἔμοιγ᾽, ἄλις, γᾶς προπονουμένας, 685
6 φαίνεται, ἔνθ᾽ ἔληξεν, αὐτοῦ μένειν.

CH. Spurn him not that never yet was false, and now is strong
in his great oath.
OE. Know you the thing you ask?
CH. We know.
OE. Speak on!
CH. Thy friend, so terribly bound by his oath to truth,
For mere suspicion's sake,
Cast not away, blamed and disgraced.
OE. Be not deceived. As thus you ask, for me
You ask destruction, or my flight from Thebes.

CH. Never! By him that is prince of the gods, the Sun,
If that thought be in us,
Hopeless, godless, friendless, may we perish!
Not so! Our hearts are heavy. The land we love is perishing.
And now shall a hurt yourselves have made be added to the
tale?

OE. So! Let him go...though I be slain for it,
Or shamed, and violently thrust from Thebes.
It is your pleading voice, 'tis not his oath,
Hath moved me. Him I shall hate where'er he be.
CR. You yield, but still you hate; and as you pass
From passion, you are hard. 'Tis very plain.
Such men—'tis just—reap for themselves most pain!
OE. Go! Get you gone, and leave me!
CR. I will go!
You know not, pity not. These trust me still, and know!

II

CH. Lady, stay no longer! Take your lord within. 'Tis time!
JO. First tell me what has chanced.
CH. Words that bred conjecture lacking knowledge, charges
whose injustice galls.
JO. Came they from both?
CH. From both.
JO. Tell me, what words?
CH. Enough! Already the land is afflicted sore!
For me, enough that strife
Fell, as it fell. There let it lie!

ΟΙ. ὁρᾷς ἵν' ἥκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὢν γνώμην ἀνήρ,
τοὐμὸν παριεὶς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

ἀντ. β'. ΧΟ. ὦναξ, εἶπον μὲν οὐχ ἅπαξ μόνον, 689
ἴσθι δὲ παραφρόνιμον, ἄπορον ἐπὶ φρόνιμα
πεφάνθαι μ' ἄν, εἴ σ' ἐνοσφιζόμαν,
ὅς τ' ἐμὰν γᾶν φίλαν ἐν πόνοισιν
ἀλύουσαν κατ' ὀρθὸν οὔρισας, 695
τανῦν τ' εὔπομπος ἂν γένοιο.

ΙΟ. πρὸς θεῶν δίδαξον κἄμ', ἄναξ, ὅτου ποτὲ
μῆνιν τοσήνδε πράγματος στήσας ἔχεις.

ΟΙ. ἐρῶ· σὲ γὰρ τῶνδ' ἐς πλέον, γύναι, σέβω— 700
Κρέοντος—οἷά μοι βεβουλευκὼς ἔχει.

ΙΟ. λέγ', εἰ σαφῶς τὸ νεῖκος ἐγκαλῶν ἐρεῖς.

ΟΙ. φονέα με φησὶ Λαΐου καθεστάναι.

ΙΟ. αὐτὸς ξυνειδώς, ἢ μαθὼν ἄλλου πάρα;

ΟΙ. μάντιν μὲν οὖν κακοῦργον εἰσπέμψας, ἐπεὶ 705
τό γ' εἰς ἑαυτὸν πᾶν ἐλευθεροῖ στόμα.

ΙΟ. σύ νυν ἀφεὶς σεαυτὸν ὧν λέγεις πέρι
ἐμοῦ 'πάκουσον, καὶ μάθ' οὕνεκ' ἐστί σοι
βρότειον οὐδὲν μαντικῆς ἔχον τέχνης.
φανῶ δέ σοι σημεῖα τῶνδε σύντομα. 710
χρησμὸς γὰρ ἦλθε Λαΐῳ ποτ'—οὐκ ἐρῶ
Φοίβου γ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, τῶν δ' ὑπηρετῶν ἄπο,
ὡς αὐτὸν ἥξοι μοῖρα πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν,
ὅστις γένοιτ' ἐμοῦ τε κἀκείνου πάρα.
καὶ τὸν μέν, ὥσπερ γ' ἡ φάτις, ξένοι ποτὲ 715
λῃσταὶ φονεύουσ' ἐν τριπλαῖς ἁμαξιτοῖς·
παιδὸς δὲ βλάστας οὐ διέσχον ἡμέραι
τρεῖς, καί νιν ἄρθρα κεῖνος ἐνζεύξας ποδοῖν
ἔρριψεν ἄλλων χερσὶν εἰς ἄβατον ὄρος.
κἀνταῦθ' Ἀπόλλων οὔτ' ἐκεῖνον ἤνυσεν 720
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρός, οὔτε Λάϊον,
τὸ δεινὸν οὐφοβεῖτο, πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν.

OE. See where it leads you, though the thought was kind,
To stay my hand and blunt my purposes.

CH. King, we have told it thee often, again we tell.
Could we put thee from us,
Call us fools and bankrupt of all wisdom.
Not so! When this dear land on a sea of woes was perishing,
You brought her a wind of Fortune. Steer the ship once more
safe home!

JO. I pray you, husband, give me also leave
To know the cause of this so steadfast wrath.
OE. I'll tell it. You are more to me than these.
'Twas Creon, and his plotting for my hurt.
JO. Speak on, my lord. Make charge and quarrel plain.
OE. He says I am the murderer of Laïus.
JO. Claiming to know it? Or on evidence?
OE. No, he has brought a rascal prophet in
To speak, and save his own lips from the lie!
JO. Then leave these thoughts....Listen to me and learn,
Listen...I'll give my proof.—On soothsaying
Nothing depends. An oracle once came
To Laïus—I'll not say it came from Phoebus,
But from his ministers—that he should die
Some day, slain by a son of him and me.
Now, the King...strangers, robbers murdered him,
So runs report, at a place where three roads meet:
And the child, not yet three days from the birth,
He took, and pierced his ancles, fettered him,
And cast him out to die on the barren hills.
Phoebus fulfilled not that; made not the son
His father's murderer; wrought not the thing
That haunted Laïus, death by that son's hand.

τοιαῦτα φῆμαι μαντικαὶ διώρισαν,
ὧν ἐντρέπου σὺ μηδέν· ὧν γὰρ ἂν θεὸς
χρείαν ἐρευνᾷ ῥᾳδίως αὐτὸς φανεῖ.
ΟΙ. οἷόν μ' ἀκούσαντ' ἀρτίως ἔχει, γύναι,
ψυχῆς πλάνημα κἀνακίνησις φρενῶν.
ΙΟ. ποίας μερίμνης τοῦθ' ὑποστραφεὶς λέγεις;
ΟΙ. ἔδοξ' ἀκοῦσαι σοῦ τόδ', ὡς ὁ Λάϊος
κατασφαγείη πρὸς τριπλαῖς ἁμαξιτοῖς.
ΙΟ. ηὐδᾶτο γὰρ ταῦτ', οὐδέ πω λήξαντ' ἔχει.
ΟΙ. καὶ ποῦ 'σθ' ὁ χῶρος οὗτος οὗ τόδ' ἦν πάθος;
ΙΟ. Φωκὶς μὲν ἡ γῆ κλῄζεται, σχιστὴ δ' ὁδὸς
ἐς ταὐτὸ Δελφῶν κἀπὸ Δαυλίας ἄγει.
ΟΙ. καὶ τίς χρόνος τοῖσδ' ἐστὶν οὐξεληλυθώς;
ΙΟ. σχεδόν τι πρόσθεν ἢ σὺ τῆσδ' ἔχων χθονὸς
ἀρχὴν ἐφαίνου, τοῦτ' ἐκηρύχθη πόλει.
ΟΙ. ὦ Ζεῦ, τί μου δρᾶσαι βεβούλευσαι πέρι;
ΙΟ. τί δ' ἐστί σοι τοῦτ', Οἰδίπους, ἐνθύμιον;
ΟΙ. μήπω μ' ἐρώτα· τὸν δὲ Λάϊον φύσιν
τίν' εἶχε φράζε, τίνος ἀκμὴν ἥβης ἔχων.
ΙΟ. μέγας, χνοάζων ἄρτι λευκανθὲς κάρα,
μορφῆς δὲ τῆς σῆς οὐκ ἀπεστάτει πολύ.
ΟΙ. οἴμοι τάλας· ἔοικ' ἐμαυτὸν εἰς ἀρὰς
δεινὰς προβάλλων ἀρτίως οὐκ εἰδέναι.
ΙΟ. πῶς φής; ὀκνῶ τοι πρὸς σ' ἀποσκοποῦσ', ἄναξ.
ΟΙ. δεινῶς ἀθυμῶ μὴ βλέπων ὁ μάντις ᾖ.
δείξεις δὲ μᾶλλον, ἢν ἓν ἐξείπῃς ἔτι.
ΙΟ. καὶ μὴν ὀκνῶ μέν, ἂν δ' ἔρῃ μαθοῦσ' ἐρῶ.
ΟΙ. πότερον ἐχώρει βαιός, ἢ πολλοὺς ἔχων
ἄνδρας λοχίτας, οἵ' ἀνὴρ ἀρχηγέτης;
ΙΟ. πέντ' ἦσαν οἱ ξύμπαντες, ἐν δ' αὐτοῖσιν ἦν
κῆρυξ· ἀπήνη δ' ἦγε Λάϊον μία.
ΟΙ. αἰαῖ, τάδ' ἤδη διαφανῆ. τίς ἦν ποτὲ
ὁ τούσδε λέξας τοὺς λόγους ὑμῖν, γύναι;

So dread, so false was prophecy! And you
Regard it not. The god right easily
Will bring to light whate'er he seeks and wills.

OE. Wife, as I heard you speak, within my soul
What trouble stirred! What fearful doubt was born!

JO. What moves you to speak thus? What is your fear?

OE. I seemed to hear you say that Laïus
Was murdered at a place where three roads meet?

JO. So it was said, and so it still is said.

OE. Tell me the country where this thing was done?

JO. Phocis the land is called, where meet the roads
That run from Delphi and from Daulia.

OE. Tell me how long ago?

JO. 'Twas publishéd
Just before you were known as King in Thebes.

OE. O Zeus, what is it thou wilt do with me!

JO. What is it, Oedipus, in this, that moves you?

OE. Ask nothing yet. Tell me of Laïus—
What was his stature? Tell me, how old was he?—

JO. Tall, and his hair turning to grey, his shape
Not unlike yours—

OE. My curse! Oh, ignorant!
Alas! I see it was myself I cursed.

JO. Speak! When I look at you I am afraid—

OE. My thoughts are heavy. Had the prophet eyes?
Help me to make it clear: one answer more—

JO. I am afraid, but ask! If I know, I'll tell.

OE. How travelled Laïus? Went he single out,
Or, like a King, with retinue and guard?

JO. They were five, five in all, and one of them
A herald—and one chariot for the King.

OE. All out, alas! All clear! Come, tell me, wife,
Who brought the news? Who gave you that report?

ΙΟ. οἰκεύς τις, ὅσπερ ἵκετ' ἐκσωθεὶς μόνος.
ΟΙ. ἦ κἀν δόμοισι τυγχάνει τανῦν παρών;
ΙΟ. οὐ δῆτ'· ἀφ' οὗ γὰρ κεῖθεν ἦλθε καὶ κράτη
σέ τ' εἶδ' ἔχοντα Λάϊόν τ' ὀλωλότα,
ἐξικέτευσε τῆς ἐμῆς χειρὸς θιγὼν
ἀγρούς σφε πέμψαι κἀπὶ ποιμνίων νομάς,
ὡς πλεῖστον εἴη τοῦδ' ἄποπτος ἄστεως.
κἄπεμψ' ἐγώ νιν· ἄξιος γὰρ οἷ' ἀνὴρ
δοῦλος φέρειν ἦν τῆσδε καὶ μείζω χάριν.
ΟΙ. πῶς ἂν μόλοι δῆθ' ἡμὶν ἐν τάχει πάλιν;
ΙΟ. πάρεστιν· ἀλλὰ πρὸς τί τοῦτ' ἐφίεσαι;
ΟΙ. δέδοικ' ἐμαυτόν, ὦ γύναι, μὴ πόλλ' ἄγαν
εἰρημέν' ᾖ μοι, δι' ἃ νιν εἰσιδεῖν θέλω.
ΙΟ. ἀλλ' ἵξεται μέν· ἀξία δέ που μαθεῖν
κἀγὼ τά γ' ἐν σοὶ δυσφόρως ἔχοντ', ἄναξ.
ΟΙ. κοὐ μὴ στερηθῇς γ', ἐς τοσοῦτον ἐλπίδων
ἐμοῦ βεβῶτος. τῷ γὰρ ἂν καὶ μείζονι
λέξαιμ' ἂν ἢ σοί, διὰ τύχης τοιᾶσδ' ἰών;
ἐμοὶ πατὴρ μὲν Πολύβος ἦν Κορίνθιος,
μήτηρ δὲ Μερόπη Δωρίς. ἠγόμην δ' ἀνὴρ
ἀστῶν μέγιστος τῶν ἐκεῖ, πρίν μοι τύχη
τοιάδ' ἐπέστη, θαυμάσαι μὲν ἀξία,
σπουδῆς γε μέντοι τῆς ἐμῆς οὐκ ἀξία.
ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἐν δείπνοις μ' ὑπερπλησθεὶς μέθῃ
καλεῖ παρ' οἴνῳ, πλαστὸς ὡς εἴην πατρί.
κἀγὼ βαρυνθεὶς τὴν μὲν οὖσαν ἡμέραν
μόλις κατέσχον, θατέρᾳ δ' ἰὼν πέλας
μητρὸς πατρός τ' ἤλεγχον· οἱ δὲ δυσφόρως
τοὔνειδος ἦγον τῷ μεθέντι τὸν λόγον.
κἀγὼ τὰ μὲν κείνοιν ἐτερπόμην, ὅμως δ'
ἔκνιζέ μ' ἀεὶ τοῦθ'· ὑφεῖρπε γὰρ πολύ.
λάθρᾳ δὲ μητρὸς καὶ πατρὸς πορεύομαι
Πυθώδε, καί μ' ὁ Φοῖβος ὧν μὲν ἱκόμην

JO. One servant who alone escaped alive.
OE. Where is that servant now? Here, in my house?
JO. No, no! He is not here. When he came home,
And saw you on the throne, and Laïus dead,
He touched me by the hand, beseeching me
To send him out into some pasture lands
Far off, to live far from the sight of Thebes.
And I—I sent him—he deserved, my lord,
Though but a slave, as much, nay more, than this.
OE. Come, we must have him back, and instantly!
JO. 'Tis easy....Yet—What would you with the man?
OE. I fear myself, dear wife; I fear that I
Have said too much, and therefore I must see him.
JO. Then he shall come. Yet, have not I some claim
To know the thought that so afflicts my lord?
OE. I'll not refuse that claim, so deep am I
Gone in forebodings. None so close as you,
To learn what ways of destiny are mine.
My father was of Corinth, Polybus;
My mother Merope, Dorian. As a prince
I lived at first in Corinth, till there fell
A stroke of Fortune, very strange, and yet
Not worth such passion as it moved in me.
Some fellow, at a banquet, flown with wine,
Called me my father's bastard, drunkenly;
And I was angry, yet for that one day
Held myself back, though hardly. Then I sought
Mother and father, questioning. The taunt
Their anger made him rue that let it fly,
And I was glad to see them angry. Still
It rankled, and I felt the rumour grow.
I told my parents nothing, but set forth
To Pytho. Phoebus, for my journey's pains,

ἄτιμον ἐξέπεμψεν, ἄλλα δ' ἄθλια
καὶ δεινὰ καὶ δύστηνα προὔφηνεν λέγων,
ὡς μητρὶ μὲν χρείη με μιχθῆναι, γένος δ'
ἄτλητον ἀνθρώποισι δηλώσοιμ' ὁρᾶν,
φονεὺς δ' ἐσοίμην τοῦ φυτεύσαντος πατρός.
κἀγώ, 'πακούσας ταῦτα, τὴν Κορινθίαν,
ἄστροις τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκμετρούμενος, χθόνα
ἔφευγον, ἔνθα μήποτ' ὀψοίμην κακῶν
χρησμῶν ὀνείδη τῶν ἐμῶν τελούμενα.
στείχων δ' ἱκνοῦμαι τούσδε τοὺς χώρους ἐν οἷς
σὺ τὸν τύραννον τοῦτον ὄλλυσθαι λέγεις.
καί σοι, γύναι, τἀληθὲς ἐξερῶ. τριπλῆς
ὅτ' ἦ κελεύθου τῆσδ' ὁδοιπορῶν πέλας,
ἐνταῦθά μοι κῆρύξ τε κἀπὶ πωλικῆς
ἀνὴρ ἀπήνης ἐμβεβώς, οἷον σὺ φής,
ξυνηντίαζον· κἀξ ὁδοῦ μ' ὅ θ' ἡγεμὼν
αὐτός θ' ὁ πρέσβυς πρὸς βίαν ἠλαυνέτην.
κἀγὼ τὸν ἐκτρέποντα, τὸν τροχηλάτην,
παίω δι' ὀργῆς· καί μ' ὁ πρέσβυς ὡς ὁρᾷ,
ὄχου, παραστείχοντα τηρήσας, μέσον
κάρα διπλοῖς κέντροισί μου καθίκετο.
οὐ μὴν ἴσην γ' ἔτεισεν, ἀλλὰ συντόμως
σκήπτρῳ τυπεὶς—ἐκ τῆσδε χειρὸς—ὕπτιος
μέσης ἀπήνης εὐθὺς ἐκκυλίνδεται·
κτείνω δὲ τοὺς ξύμπαντας....εἰ δὲ τῷ ξένῳ
τούτῳ προσήκει Λαΐῳ τι συγγενές,
τίς τοῦδε νῦν ἔστ' ἀνδρὸς ἀθλιώτερος;
τίς ἐχθροδαίμων μᾶλλον ἂν γένοιτ' ἀνήρ;
ὃν μὴ ξένων ἔξεστι μηδ' ἀστῶν τινι
δόμοις δέχεσθαι, μηδὲ προσφωνεῖν τινα,
ὠθεῖν δ' ἀπ' οἴκων. καὶ τάδ' οὔτις ἄλλος ἦν
ἢ 'γὼ 'π' ἐμαυτῷ τάσδ' ἀρὰς ὁ προστιθείς.
λέχη δὲ τοῦ θανόντος ἐν χεροῖν ἐμαῖν

Gave me no clue—dismissed me—yet flashed out,
In words most strange and sad and horrible :—
'Thou shalt defile thy mother, show mankind
A brood by thee begot intolerable,
And shalt be thy own father's murderer.'
When this I heard, I fled. Where Corinth lay
Henceforth I guessed but by the stars. My road
Was exile, where I might escape the sight
Of that foul oracle's shame fulfilled on me.
And as I went, I came to that same land
In which you tell me that your King was slain.
Wife, I will tell you all the truth. I passed
Close by that meeting of three ways, and there
A herald met me, and a man that drove
Steeds and a car, even as you have said.
The leader, aye, the old man too, were fain
To thrust me rudely from the road. But I,
When one that led the horses jostled me,
Struck him in anger. This the old man saw,
And, from the car—watching for me to pass—
Full on my head dashed down his forking goad—
But paid me double for it. Instantly,
Out from the car, my staff and this right hand
Smote him and hurled him backward to the ground,
And all of them I slew.
If there be aught
That makes that stranger one with Laïus,
There lives to-day no wretch so sad as I,
Nor ever can be one more scorned of heaven
Than I, whom none may welcome, citizen
Or stranger, to his home; nor speak to me;
But only drive me out. And this—'twas I,
No other, on myself invoked this curse.
These hands, by which he died, pollute his bed

χραίνω, δι' ὃνπερ ὤλετ'. ἆρ' ἔφυν κακός;
ἆρ' οὐχὶ πᾶς ἄναγνος; εἴ με χρὴ φυγεῖν,
καί μοι φυγόντι μήστι τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἰδεῖν,
μή μ' ἐμβατεύειν πατρίδος, ἢ γάμοις με δεῖ
μητρὸς ζυγῆναι καὶ πατέρα κατακτανεῖν
Πόλυβον, ὃς ἐξέφυσε κἀξέθρεψέ με.
ἆρ' οὐκ ἀπ' ὠμοῦ ταῦτα δαίμονός τις ἂν
κρίνων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἂν ὀρθοίη λόγον;
μὴ δῆτα, μὴ δῆτ', ὦ θεῶν ἁγνὸν σέβας,
ἴδοιμι ταύτην ἡμέραν, ἀλλ' ἐκ βροτῶν
βαίην ἄφαντος πρόσθεν ἢ τοιάνδ' ἰδεῖν
κηλῖδ' ἐμαυτῷ συμφορᾶς ἀφιγμένην.

ΧΟ. ἡμῖν μέν, ὦναξ, ταῦτ' ὀκνήρ'· ἕως δ' ἂν οὖν
πρὸς τοῦ παρόντος ἐκμάθῃς, ἔχ' ἐλπίδα.

ΟΙ. καὶ μὴν τοσοῦτόν γ' ἐστί μοι τῆς ἐλπίδος,
τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν βοτῆρα προσμεῖναι μόνον.

ΙΟ. πεφασμένου δὲ τίς ποθ' ἡ προθυμία;

ΟΙ. ἐγὼ διδάξω σ'· ἢν γὰρ εὑρεθῇ λέγων
σοὶ ταὐτ', ἔγωγ' ἂν ἐκπεφευγοίην πάθος.

ΙΟ. ποῖον δέ μου περισσὸν ἤκουσας λόγον;

ΟΙ. λῃστὰς ἔφασκες αὐτὸν ἄνδρας ἐννέπειν
ὡς νιν κατακτείνειαν. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἔτι
λέξει τὸν αὐτὸν ἀριθμόν, οὐκ ἐγὼ 'κτανον·
οὐ γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν εἷς γε τοῖς πολλοῖς ἴσος·
εἰ δ' ἄνδρ' ἓν' οἰόζωνον αὐδήσει, σαφῶς
τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἤδη τοὔργον εἰς ἐμὲ ῥέπον.

ΙΟ. ἀλλ' ὡς φανέν γε τοὔπος ὧδ' ἐπίστασο,
κοὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ τοῦτό γ' ἐκβαλεῖν πάλιν·
πόλις γὰρ ἤκουσ', οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη, τάδε.
εἰ δ' οὖν τι κἀκτρέποιτο τοῦ πρόσθεν λόγου,
οὔτοι ποτ', ὦναξ, τόν γε Λαΐου φόνον
φανεῖ δικαίως ὀρθόν, ὅν γε Λοξίας
διεῖπε χρῆναι παιδὸς ἐξ ἐμοῦ θανεῖν.

And her that shared it. Am I vile enough?
Am I not all uncleanness. I must fly;
And, though I fly from Thebes, must never set
My foot in my own country, never see
My people there, or else I must be joined
In marriage with my mother, and must kill
My father, Polybus, that got and reared me.
If any judge my life and find therein
Malignant stars at work, he hath the truth.
No, No! Ye pure and awful gods, forbid
That I should see that day! Oh, let me pass
Out from the world of men, before my doom
Of living set so foul a blot on me!

CH. O King, we fear thy words, yet bid thee hope,
Till he that saw the deed bring certainty.

OE. Why—hope, one little hope, remains. 'Tis this:—
To wait that herdsman's coming; nothing more.

JO. What—if he comes—what would you have of him?

OE. Listen, and I will tell you. If it prove
He speaks as you have spoken, I am saved.

JO. Tell me, what was it in my words?

OE. You said
This was his tale, that robbers slew the King,
Robbers. If he confirm it, if he speak
Of numbers still, it was not I, not I,
That slew. One man is not a company.
But if he names one lonely wayfarer,
Then sways the deed to me, and all is true.

JO. No. It is certain. When he brought his news
He told it thus. Not I alone, but all
Our city heard. He cannot take it back.
And should he swerve a little from his tale,
He cannot show, my King, that Laïus died
As prophets would have had him. Loxias
Declared a son of mine must murder him;—

καίτοι νιν οὐ κεῖνός γ' ὁ δύστηνός ποτε
κατέκταν', ἀλλ' αὐτὸς πάροιθεν ὤλετο.
ὥστ' οὐχὶ μαντείας γ' ἂν οὔτε τῇδ' ἐγὼ
βλέψαιμ' ἂν οὔνεκ' οὔτε τῇδ' ἂν ὕστερον.

ΟΙ. καλῶς νομίζεις....ἀλλ' ὅμως τὸν ἐργάτην
πέμψον τινὰ στελοῦντα, μηδὲ τοῦτ' ἀφῇς.

ΙΟ. πέμψω ταχύνασ'. ἀλλ' ἴωμεν ἐς δόμους·
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν πράξαιμ' ἂν ὧν οὐ σοὶ φίλον.

στρ. α'. ΧΟ. εἴ μοι ξυνείη φέροντι
2 μοῖρα τὰν εὔσεπτον ἁγνείαν λόγων
3 ἔργων τε πάντων, ὧν νόμοι πρόκεινται
4 ὑψίποδες, οὐρανίαν
5 δι' αἰθέρα τεκνωθέντες, ὧν Ὄλυμπος
6 πατὴρ μόνος, οὐδέ νιν
7 θνατὰ φύσις ἀνέρων
8 ἔτικτεν, οὐδὲ μή ποτε λάθα κατακοιμάσῃ·
9 μέγας ἐν τούτοις θεός, οὐδὲ γηράσκει.

ἀντ. α'. ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον·
2 ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,
3 ἃ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,
4 ἀκρότατά τις δ' ἀναβὰς
5 ἀπότομον <ἀνὴρ> ὤρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν,
6 ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ
7 χρῆται. τὸ καλῶς δ' ἔχον
8 πόλει πάλαισμα μήποτε λῦσαι θεὸν αἰτοῦμαι.
9 θεὸν οὐ λήξω ποτὲ προστάταν ἴσχων.

στρ. β'. εἰ δέ τις ὑπέροπτα χερσὶν ἢ λόγῳ πορεύεται,
2 Δίκας ἀφόβητος, οὐδὲ
3 δαιμόνων ἕδη σέβων,
4 κακά νιν ἕλοιτο μοῖρα,
5 δυσπότμου χάριν χλιδᾶς,
6 εἰ μὴ τὸ κέρδος κερδανεῖ δικαίως

And then that poor lost creature never lived
To kill him. Long ere that, my child was dead.
Since that, for all the soothsayers can tell,
I go straight on, I look not right nor left.

OE. 'Tis well. 'Tis very well. And yet—that slave—
Send for him. Have him fetched. Neglect it not.

JO. I'll send without delay. Let us go in.
I will do nothing, nothing, but to please you.

CH. Be the prize of all my days
In every word, in every deed,
Purity, with Reverence.
Laws thereof are set before us.
In the heights they move.
They were born where Heaven is,
And Olympus fathered them.
Mortal parent have they none,
Nor shall man's forgetfulness ever make them sleep.
A god in them is great. He grows not old.

Insolence it is that breeds
A tyrant, Insolence enriched
Overmuch with vanities,
Gains unmeet, that give no profit.
So he climbs the height,
So down to a destiny
Evil utterly he leaps,
Where there is no help at all.
True Ambition, for the State, quench it not, O God!
Apollo, still in thee is my defence.

True Ambition, yes! But if a man
Tread the ways of Arrogance;
Fear not Justice, honour not the gods enshrined;
Evil take him! Ruin be the prize
Of his fatal pride!
If his gain be gain of wrong,

καὶ τῶν ἀσέπτων ἔρξεται,
ἢ τῶν ἀθίκτων θίξεται ματάζων.
τίς ἔτι ποτ' ἐν τοῖσδ' ἀνὴρ θεῶν βέλη
εὔξεται ψυχᾶς ἀμύνειν;
εἰ γὰρ αἱ τοιαίδε πράξεις τίμιαι,
τί δεῖ με χορεύειν;

ἀντ. β'. οὐκέτι τὸν ἄθικτον εἶμι γᾶς ἐπ' ὀμφαλὸν σέβων,
οὐδ' ἐς τὸν Ἀβαῖσι ναόν,
οὐδὲ τὰν Ὀλυμπίαν,
εἰ μὴ τάδε χειρόδεικτα
πᾶσιν ἁρμόσει βροτοῖς.
ἀλλ', ὦ κρατύνων, εἴπερ ὀρθ' ἀκούεις,
Ζεῦ, πάντ' ἀνάσσων, μὴ λάθοι
σὲ τάν τε σὰν ἀθάνατον αἰὲν ἀρχάν.
φθίνοντα γὰρ Λαΐου <παλαίφατα>
θέσφατ' ἐξαιροῦσιν ἤδη,
κουδαμοῦ τιμαῖς Ἀπόλλων ἐμφανής·
ἔρρει δὲ τὰ θεῖα.

ΙΟ. χώρας ἄνακτες, δόξα μοι παρεστάθη
ναοὺς ἱκέσθαι δαιμόνων, τάδ' ἐν χεροῖν
στέφη λαβούσῃ κἀπιθυμιάματα.
ὑψοῦ γὰρ αἴρει θυμὸν Οἰδίπους ἄγαν
λύπαισι παντοίαισιν· οὐδ' ὁποῖ' ἀνὴρ
ἔννους τὰ καινὰ τοῖς πάλαι τεκμαίρεται,
ἀλλ' ἔστι τοῦ λέγοντος, ἢν φόβους λέγῃ.
ὅτ' οὖν παραινοῦσ' οὐδὲν ἐς πλέον ποιῶ,
πρὸς σ', ὦ Λύκει' Ἄπολλον, ἄγχιστος γὰρ εἶ,
ἱκέτις ἀφίγμαι τοῖσδε σὺν κατεύγμασιν,
ὅπως λύσιν τιν' ἡμὶν εὐαγῆ πόρῃς·
ὡς νῦν ὀκνοῦμεν πάντες ἐκπεπληγμένον
κεῖνον βλέποντες ὡς κυβερνήτην νεώς.

If he know not reverence,
If in vanity he dare profane
Sanctities inviolate,
Then from the arrows of the gods what mortal man shall save his soul alive?
If doings such as these be countenanced,
What mean religion's holy dance and hymn?
No more shall I seek in reverence
Earth's inviolate Central Shrine;
No more go to Abai, nor Olympia;
If before all eyes the oracle
Fit not the event!
Zeus, if thou art rightly named,
King and Master over all,
Save thine honour! Let not this escape
Thine eternal governance!
Look to thy oracles of old concerning Laïus; put to nought by man,
They fade, nor is Apollo glorified
In worship any more. Religion dies!

Jo. Princes of Thebes, the thought has come to me
To seek the temples of the gods with boughs
Of supplication and these offerings
Of incense. Oedipus, much overwrought,
And every way distracted, cannot judge
The present sanely by the past, but lends
All ears to every voice that bids him fear.
So, since my words are spent in vain, I come
To thee, Apollo—thou art near to us,
Lycean!—and I pray thee, take the gift,
And grant some clean way of deliverance!
We are afraid; for Oedipus, the guide
And captain of us all, runs mad with fear.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ.

ἆρ' ἂν παρ' ὑμῶν, ὦ ξένοι, μάθοιμ' ὅπου
τὰ τοῦ τυράννου δώματ' ἐστὶν Οἰδίπου;
μάλιστα δ' αὐτὸν εἶπατ', εἰ κάτισθ' ὅπου.

ΧΟ. στέγαι μὲν αἵδε, καὐτὸς ἔνδον, ὦ ξένε·
γυνὴ δὲ μήτηρ ἥδε τῶν κείνου τέκνων.

ΑΓ. ἀλλ' ὀλβία τε καὶ ξὺν ὀλβίοις ἀεὶ
γένοιτ', ἐκείνου γ' οὖσα παντελὴς δάμαρ.

ΙΟ. αὔτως δὲ καὶ σύ γ', ὦ ξέν'· ἄξιος γὰρ εἶ
τῆς εὐεπείας οὕνεκ'. ἀλλὰ φράζ' ὅτου
χρῄζων ἀφῖξαι χὤ τι σημῆναι θέλων.

ΑΓ. ἀγαθὰ δόμοις τε καὶ πόσει τῷ σῷ, γύναι.

ΙΟ. τὰ ποῖα ταῦτα; παρὰ τίνος δ' ἀφιγμένος;

ΑΓ. ἐκ τῆς Κορίνθου. τὸ δ' ἔπος οὐξερῶ τάχα,
ἥδοιο μέν, πῶς δ' οὐκ ἄν; ἀσχάλλοις δ' ἴσως.

ΙΟ. τί δ' ἔστι; ποίαν δύναμιν ὧδ' ἔχει διπλῆν;

ΑΓ. τύραννον αὐτὸν οὐπιχώριοι χθονὸς
τῆς Ἰσθμίας στήσουσιν, ὡς ηὐδᾶτ' ἐκεῖ.

ΙΟ. τί δ'; οὐχ ὁ πρέσβυς Πόλυβος ἐγκρατὴς ἔτι;

ΑΓ. οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεί νιν θάνατος ἐν τάφοις ἔχει.

ΙΟ. πῶς εἶπας; ἢ τέθνηκε Πόλυβος, <ὦ γέρον;>

ΑΓ. εἰ μὴ λέγω τἀληθές, ἀξιῶ θανεῖν.

ΙΟ. ὦ πρόσπολ', οὐχὶ δεσπότῃ τάδ' ὡς τάχος
μολοῦσα λέξεις; ὦ θεῶν μαντεύματα,
ἵν' ἐστέ· τοῦτον Οἰδίπους πάλαι τρέμων
τὸν ἄνδρ' ἔφευγε μὴ κτάνοι· καὶ νῦν ὅδε
πρὸς τῆς τύχης ὄλωλεν οὐδὲ τοῦδ' ὕπο.

ΟΙ. ὦ φίλτατον γυναικὸς Ἰοκάστης κάρα,
τί μ' ἐξεπέμψω δεῦρο τῶνδε δωμάτων;

ΙΟ. ἄκουε τἀνδρὸς τοῦδε, καὶ σκόπει κλύων
τὰ σέμν' ἵν' ἥκει τοῦ θεοῦ μαντεύματα.

ΟΙ. οὗτος δὲ τίς ποτ' ἐστὶ καὶ τί μοι λέγει;

ΙΟ. ἐκ τῆς Κορίνθου, πατέρα τὸν σὸν ἀγγελῶν

MESSENGER FROM CORINTH.

Can you direct me, strangers, to the house
Of Oedipus, your Master.—Better still,
Perchance you know where I may find the King?

CH. This is the house, and he within. The Queen,
His wife and mother of his home, is here.

ME. His wife, and blest with offspring! Happiness
Wait on her always, and on all her home!

JO. I wish you happy too. Your gracious speech
Deserves no less. Tell me, with what request
You are come hither, or what news you bring.

ME. Lady, good news for him and all his house.

JO. Why, what good news is this? Who sent you here?

ME. I come from Corinth, and have that to tell
I think will please, though it be partly sad.

JO. What? Can a sad tale please? How? Tell it me!

ME. The people of that country, so men said,
Will choose him monarch of Corinthia.

JO. What? Is old Polybus no longer King?

ME. No longer King. Death has him in the grave.

JO. Death! Say you so? Oedipus' father dead?

ME. If he be not so, may I die myself!

JO. Quick! To your master, girl; tell him this news!
O oracles of the gods, where are you now!
This was the man that Oedipus so feared
To slay, he needs must leave his country. Dead!
And 'tis not Oedipus, but Fortune slew him!

OE. Tell me, Jocasta, wife of my dear love,
Why you have called me hither, out of doors.

JO. Let this man speak; and as you listen, judge
The issue of the god's grand oracles!

OE. This man, who is he? What has he to tell?

JO. He comes from Corinth, and will tell you this:—

ὡς οὐκέτ' ὄντα Πόλυβον, ἀλλ' ὀλωλότα.
ΟΙ. τί φής, ξέν'; αὐτός μοι σὺ σημάντωρ γενοῦ.
ΑΓ. εἰ τοῦτο πρῶτον δεῖ μ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι σαφῶς,
εὖ ἴσθ' ἐκεῖνον θανάσιμον βεβηκότα.
ΟΙ. πότερα δόλοισιν, ἢ νόσου ξυναλλαγῇ; 960
ΑΓ. σμικρὰ παλαιὰ σώματ' εὐνάζει ῥοπή.
ΟΙ. νόσοις ὁ τλήμων, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἔφθιτο.
ΑΓ. καὶ τῷ μακρῷ γε συμμετρούμενος χρόνῳ.
ΟΙ. φεῦ φεῦ, τί δῆτ' ἄν, ὦ γύναι, σκοποῖτό τις
τὴν Πυθόμαντιν ἑστίαν, ἢ τοὺς ἄνω 965
κλάζοντας ὄρνεις, ὧν ὑφηγητῶν ἐγὼ
κτενεῖν ἔμελλον πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν; ὁ δὲ θανὼν
κεύθει κάτω δὴ γῆς· ἐγὼ δ' ὅδ' ἐνθάδε
ἄψαυστος ἔγχους·—εἴ τι μὴ τῴμῷ πόθῳ
κατέφθιθ'· οὕτω δ' ἂν θανὼν εἴη 'ξ ἐμοῦ— 970
τὰ δ' οὖν παρόντα συλλαβὼν θεσπίσματα
κεῖται παρ' Ἅιδῃ Πόλυβος ἄξι' οὐδενός.
ΙΟ. οὔκουν ἐγώ σοι ταῦτα προὔλεγον πάλαι;
ΟΙ. ηὔδας· ἐγὼ δὲ τῷ φόβῳ παρηγόμην.
ΙΟ. μὴ νῦν ἔτ' αὐτῶν μηδὲν ἐς θυμὸν βάλῃς. 975
ΟΙ. καὶ πῶς τὸ μητρὸς λέκτρον οὐκ ὀκνεῖν με δεῖ;
ΙΟ. τί δ' ἂν φοβοῖτ' ἄνθρωπος, ᾧ τὰ τῆς τύχης
κρατεῖ, πρόνοια δ' ἐστὶν οὐδενὸς σαφής;
εἰκῇ κράτιστον ζῆν, ὅπως δύναιτό τις.
σὺ δ' εἰς τὰ μητρὸς μὴ φοβοῦ νυμφεύματα· 980
πολλοὶ γὰρ ἤδη κἀν ὀνείρασιν βροτῶν
μητρὶ ξυνευνάσθησαν. ἀλλὰ ταῦθ' ὅτῳ
παρ' οὐδέν ἐστι, ῥᾷστα τὸν βίον φέρει.
ΟΙ. καλῶς ἅπαντα ταῦτ' ἂν ἐξείρητό σοι,
εἰ μὴ 'κύρει ζῶσ' ἡ τεκοῦσα· νῦν δ', ἐπεὶ 985
ζῇ, πᾶσ' ἀνάγκη, κεἰ καλῶς λέγεις, ὀκνεῖν.
ΙΟ. καὶ μὴν μέγας γ' ὀφθαλμὸς οἱ πατρὸς τάφοι.
ΟΙ. μέγας, ξυνίημ'· ἀλλὰ τῆς ζώσης φόβος.

Polybus is no more. Your father's dead.

OE. What! Is this true, sir? Answer for yourself!

ME. If this must needs come first in my report,
'Tis true enough. King Polybus is dead.

OE. By treachery? Or did sickness visit him?

ME. A little shift of the scale, and old men sleep.

OE. Ah! My poor father died, you say, by sickness?

ME. Yes, and by reason of his length of days.

OE. Ah me! Wife, why should any man regard
The Delphic Hearth oracular, and the birds
That scream above us—guides, whose evidence
Doomed me to kill my father, who is dead,
Yes, buried under ground, and I stand here,
And have not touched my weapon.—Stay! Perchance
'Twas grief for me. I may have slain him so.
Anyhow, he is dead, and to his grave
Has carried all these oracles—worth nought!

JO. Worth nought. Did I not tell you so long since?

OE. You told me, but my fears misguided me.

JO. Banish these thoughts for ever from your soul.

OE. No, no! Shall I not fear my mother's bed?

JO. Why, what should a man fear? Luck governs all!
There's no foreknowledge, and no providence!
Take life at random. Live as you best can.
That's the best way. What! Fear that you may wed
Your mother? Many a man has dreamt as much,
And so may you! The man who values least
Such scruples, lives his life most easily.

OE. All this were well enough, that you have said,
Were not my mother living. Though your words
Be true, my mother lives, and I must fear.

JO. At least your father's death is a great hope.

OE. I know. Yet she that lives makes me afraid.

ΑΓ. ποίας δὲ καὶ γυναικὸς ἐκφοβεῖσθ' ὕπερ;
ΟΙ. Μερόπης, γεραιέ, Πόλυβος ἧς ᾥκει μέτα.
ΑΓ. τί δ' ἔστ' ἐκείνης ὑμὶν ἐς φόβον φέρον;
ΟΙ. θεήλατον μάντευμα δεινόν, ὦ ξένε.
ΑΓ. ἦ ῥητόν; ἢ οὐχὶ θεμιτὸν ἄλλον εἰδέναι;
ΟΙ. μάλιστά γ'· εἶπε γάρ με Λοξίας ποτὲ
χρῆναι μιγῆναι μητρὶ τἠμαυτοῦ, τό τε
πατρῷον αἷμα χερσὶ ταῖς ἐμαῖς ἑλεῖν.
ὧν οὕνεχ' ἡ Κόρινθος ἐξ ἐμοῦ πάλαι
μακρὰν ἀπῳκεῖτ'· εὐτυχῶς μέν, ἀλλ' ὅμως
τὰ τῶν τεκόντων ὄμματ' ἥδιστον βλέπειν.
ΑΓ. ἦ γὰρ τάδ' ὀκνῶν κεῖθεν ἦσθ' ἀπόπτολις;
ΟΙ. πατρός τε χρῄζων μὴ φονεὺς εἶναι, γέρον.
ΑΓ. τί δῆτ' ἐγὼ οὐχὶ τοῦδε τοῦ φόβου σ', ἄναξ,
ἐπείπερ εὔνους ἦλθον, ἐξελυσάμην;
ΟΙ. καὶ μὴν χάριν γ' ἂν ἀξίαν λάβοις ἐμοῦ.
ΑΓ. καὶ μὴν μάλιστα τοῦτ' ἀφικόμην, ὅπως
σοῦ πρὸς δόμους ἐλθόντος εὖ πράξαιμί τι.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ' οὔποτ' εἶμι τοῖς φυτεύσασίν γ' ὁμοῦ.
ΑΓ. ὦ παῖ, καλῶς εἶ δῆλος οὐκ εἰδὼς τί δρᾷς.
ΟΙ. πῶς, ὦ γεραιέ; πρὸς θεῶν δίδασκέ με.
ΑΓ. εἰ τῶνδε φεύγεις οὕνεκ' εἰς οἴκους μολεῖν.
ΟΙ. ταρβῶν γε μή μοι Φοῖβος ἐξέλθῃ σαφής.
ΑΓ. ἦ μὴ μίασμα τῶν φυτευσάντων λάβῃς;
ΟΙ. τοῦτ' αὐτό, πρέσβυ, τοῦτό μ' εἰσαεὶ φοβεῖ.
ΑΓ. ἆρ' οἶσθα δῆτα πρὸς δίκης οὐδὲν τρέμων;
ΟΙ. πῶς δ' οὐχί, παῖς γ' εἰ τῶνδε γεννητῶν ἔφυν;
ΑΓ. ὀθούνεκ' ἦν σοι Πόλυβος οὐδὲν ἐν γένει.
ΟΙ. πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ Πόλυβος ἐξέφυσέ με;
ΑΓ. οὐ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν τοῦδε τἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ἴσον.
ΟΙ. καὶ πῶς ὁ φύσας ἐξ ἴσου τῷ μηδενί;
ΑΓ. ἀλλ' οὔ σ' ἐγείνατ' οὔτ' ἐκεῖνος οὔτ' ἐγώ.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ' ἀντὶ τοῦ δὴ παῖδά μ' ὠνομάζετο;

ME. What woman is the cause of all these fears?
OE. Merope, sir, that dwelt with Polybus.
ME. What find you both to fear in Merope?
OE. An oracle from the gods, most terrible.
ME. May it be told, or did the gods forbid?
OE. No, you may hear. Phoebus hath said that I
Must come to know my mother's body, come
To shed with my own hand my father's blood.
Therefore have I put Corinth this long time
Far from me. Fortune has been kind, and yet
To see a parent's face is best of all.
ME. Was this the fear that drove you from your home?
OE. This, and my will never to slay my father.
ME. Then since I came only to serve you well,
Why should I hesitate to end that fear?
OE. Ah! If you could, you should not miss your thanks!
ME. Ah! That was my chief thought in coming here,
To do myself some good on your return.
OE. No, where my parents are, I'll not return!
ME. Son, I can see, you know not what you do.
OE. 'Fore God, what mean you, sir? Say what you know.
ME. If this be all that frightens you from home!—
OE. All? 'Tis the fear Apollo may prove true—
ME. And you polluted, and your parents wronged?
OE. Aye, it is that, good man! Always that fear!
ME. Can you not see the folly of such thoughts?
OE. Folly? Why folly, since I am their son?
ME. Because King Polybus was nought to you!
OE. How now? The father that begot me, nought?
ME. No more, no less, than I who speak to you!
OE. How should my father rank with nought—with you?
ME. He never was your father, nor am I.
OE. His reason, then, for calling me his son?

ΑΓ. δῶρόν ποτ', ἴσθι, τῶν ἐμῶν χειρῶν λαβών.
ΟΙ. κᾆθ' ὧδ' ἀπ' ἄλλης χειρὸς ἔστερξεν μέγα;
ΑΓ. ἡ γὰρ πρὶν αὐτὸν ἐξέπεισ' ἀπαιδία.
ΟΙ. σὺ δ' ἐμπολήσας—ἦ τεκών μ' αὐτῷ δίδως;
ΑΓ. εὑρὼν ναπαίαις ἐν Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχαῖς.
ΟΙ. ὠδοιπόρεις δὲ πρὸς τί τούσδε τοὺς τόπους;
ΑΓ. ἐνταῦθ' ὀρείοις ποιμνίοις ἐπεστάτουν.
ΟΙ. ποιμὴν γὰρ ἦσθα κἀπὶ θητείᾳ πλάνης;
ΑΓ. σοῦ δ', ὦ τέκνον, σωτήρ γε τῷ τότ' ἐν χρόνῳ.
ΟΙ. τί δ' ἄλγος ἴσχοντ' ἐν κακοῖς με λαμβάνεις;
ΑΓ. ποδῶν ἂν ἄρθρα μαρτυρήσειεν τὰ σά.
ΟΙ. οἴμοι, τί τοῦτ' ἀρχαῖον ἐννέπεις κακόν;
ΑΓ. λύω σ' ἔχοντα διατόρους ποδοῖν ἀκμάς.
ΟΙ. δεινόν γ' ὄνειδος σπαργάνων ἀνειλόμην.
ΑΓ. ὥστ' ὠνομάσθης ἐκ τύχης ταύτης ὃς εἶ.
ΟΙ. ὦ πρὸς θεῶν, πρὸς μητρός, ἢ πατρός; φράσον.
ΑΓ. οὐκ οἶδ'· ὁ δοὺς δὲ ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ λῷον φρονεῖ.
ΟΙ. ἦ γὰρ παρ' ἄλλου μ' ἔλαβες οὐδ' αὐτὸς τυχών;
ΑΓ. οὔκ, ἀλλὰ ποιμὴν ἄλλος ἐκδίδωσί μοι.
ΟΙ. τίς οὗτος; ἢ κάτοισθα δηλῶσαι λόγῳ;
ΑΓ. τῶν Λαΐου δήπου τις ὠνομάζετο.
ΟΙ. ἦ τοῦ τυράννου τῆσδε γῆς πάλαι ποτέ;
ΑΓ. μάλιστα· τούτου τἀνδρὸς οὗτος ἦν βοτήρ.
ΟΙ. ἦ κἄστ' ἔτι ζῶν οὗτος, ὥστ' ἰδεῖν ἐμέ;
ΑΓ. ὑμεῖς γ' ἄριστ' εἰδεῖτ' ἂν οὐπιχώριοι.
ΟΙ. ἔστιν τις ὑμῶν τῶν παρεστώτων πέλας
ὅστις κάτοιδε τὸν βοτῆρ' ὃν ἐννέπει,
εἴτ' οὖν ἐπ' ἀγρῶν εἴτε κἀνθάδ' εἰσιδών;
σημήναθ', ὡς ὁ καιρὸς ηὑρῆσθαι τάδε.
ΧΟ. οἶμαι μὲν οὐδέν' ἄλλον ἢ τὸν ἐξ ἀγρῶν,
ὃν κἀμάτευες πρόσθεν εἰσιδεῖν· ἀτὰρ
ἥδ' ἂν τάδ' οὐχ ἥκιστ' ἂν Ἰοκάστη λέγοι.
ΟΙ. γύναι, νοεῖς ἐκεῖνον ὄντιν' ἀρτίως

ΜΕ. You were a gift. He had you from these arms.
ΟΕ. He gave that great love to a stranger's child?
ΜΕ. Because he had none of his own to love.
ΟΕ. So. Did you buy this child,—or was it yours?
ΜΕ. I found you where Cithaeron's valleys wind.
ΟΕ. Our Theban hills! What made you travel here?
ΜΕ. Once on these very hills I kept my flocks.
ΟΕ. A shepherd? Travelling to earn your wages?
ΜΕ. Yes, but your saviour too, my son, that day!
ΟΕ. What ailed me, that you found me in distress?
ΜΕ. Ask your own feet. They best can answer that.
ΟΕ. No, no! Why name that old familiar hurt?
ΜΕ. I set you free. Your feet were pinned together!
ΟΕ. A brand of shame, alas! from infancy!
ΜΕ. And from that fortune comes the name you bear.
ΟΕ. Who named me? Who? Father or mother? Speak!
ΜΕ. I know not. He that gave you to me—may!
ΟΕ. You found me not? You had me from another?
ΜΕ. Another shepherd bade me take you. True.
ΟΕ. What shepherd? Can you tell me? Do you know?
ΜΕ. I think they called him one of Laïus' people.
ΟΕ. Laïus? The same that once was King in Thebes?
ΜΕ. Aye. 'Twas the same. For him he shepherded.
ΟΕ. Ah! Could I find him? Is he still alive?
ΜΕ. You best can tell, you, natives of the place!
ΟΕ. Has any man here present knowledge of
The shepherd he describes? Has any seen,
Or here or in the pastures, such an one?
Speak! 'Tis the time for full discovery!
ΧΟ. I think, my lord, he means that countryman
Whose presence you desired. But there is none,
Perchance, can tell you better than the Queen.
ΟΕ. You heard him, wife. Think you he means the man

μολεῖν ἐφιέμεσθα; τόνδ' οὗτος λέγει;
ΙΟ. τί δ' ὄντιν' εἶπε; μηδὲν ἐντραπῇς. τὰ δὲ
ῥηθέντα βούλου μηδὲ μεμνῆσθαι μάτην.
ΟΙ. οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο τοῦθ', ὅπως ἐγὼ λαβὼν
σημεῖα τοιαῦτ' οὐ φανῶ τοὐμὸν γένος.
ΙΟ. μὴ πρὸς θεῶν, εἴπερ τι τοῦ σαυτοῦ βίου
κήδει, ματεύσῃς τοῦθ'· ἄλις νοσοῦσ' ἐγώ.
ΟΙ. θάρσει· σὺ μὲν γὰρ οὐδ' ἐὰν τρίτης ἐγὼ
μητρὸς φανῶ τρίδουλος ἐκφανεῖ κακή.
ΙΟ. ὅμως πιθοῦ μοι, λίσσομαι· μὴ δρᾶ τάδε.
ΟΙ. οὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην μὴ οὐ τάδ' ἐκμαθεῖν σαφῶς.
ΙΟ. καὶ μὴν φρονοῦσά γ' εὖ τὰ λῷστά σοι λέγω.
ΟΙ. τὰ λῷστα τοίνυν ταὐτά μ' ἀλγύνει πάλαι.
ΙΟ. ὦ δύσποτμ', εἴθε μήποτε γνοίης ὃς εἶ.
ΟΙ. ἄξει τις ἐλθὼν δεῦρο τὸν βοτῆρά μοι;
ταύτην δ' ἐᾶτε πλουσίῳ χαίρειν γένει.
ΙΟ. ἰοὺ ἰού, δύστηνε· τοῦτο γάρ σ' ἔχω
μόνον προσειπεῖν, ἄλλο δ' οὔποθ' ὕστερον.
ΧΟ. τί ποτε βέβηκεν, Οἰδίπους, ὑπ' ἀγρίας
ἀξασα λύπης ἡ γυνή; δέδοιχ' ὅπως
μὴ 'κ τῆς σιωπῆς τῆσδ' ἀναρρήξει κακά.
ΟΙ. ὁποῖα χρῄζει ῥηγνύτω· τοὐμὸν δ' ἐγώ,
κεἰ σμικρόν ἐστι, σπέρμ' ἰδεῖν βουλήσομαι.
αὕτη δ' ἴσως, φρονεῖ γὰρ ὡς γυνὴ μέγα,
τὴν δυσγένειαν τὴν ἐμὴν αἰσχύνεται.
ἐγὼ δ' ἐμαυτὸν παῖδα τῆς Τύχης νέμων
τῆς εὖ διδούσης οὐκ ἀτιμασθήσομαι.
τῆς γὰρ πέφυκα μητρός· οἱ δὲ συγγενεῖς
μῆνές με μικρὸν καὶ μέγαν διώρισαν.
τοιόσδε δ' ἐκφὺς οὐκ ἂν ἐξέλθοιμ' ἔτι
ποτ' ἄλλος, ὥστε μὴ 'κμαθεῖν τοὐμὸν γένος.
στρ. ΧΟ. εἴπερ ἐγὼ μάντις εἰμὶ καὶ κατὰ γνώμαν ἴδρις,
2 οὐ τὸν Ὄλυμπον ἀπείρων,

Whom we await already? Was it he?

JO. What matter what he means? Oh, take no heed,
And waste no thoughts, I beg you, on such tales.

OE. For me it is not possible—to hold
Such clues as these, and leave my secret so.

JO. No! By the gods, no; leave it, if you care
For your own life. I suffer. 'Tis enough.

OE. Take heart. *Your* noble blood is safe, although
I prove thrice bastard, and three times a slave!

JO. Yet, I beseech you, yield, and ask no more.

OE. I cannot yield my right to know the truth.

JO. And yet I speak—I think—but for your good.

OE. And this same good, I find, grows tedious.

JO. Alas! I pray you may not know yourself.

OE. Go, someone, fetch the herdsman! Let the Queen
Enjoy her pride in her fine family!

JO. O Wretched, Wretched utterly! That name
I give you, and henceforth no other name!

CH. Why went the Queen so swiftly, Oedipus,
As by some anguish moved? Alas! I fear
Lest from that silence something ill break forth.

OE. Break what break will! My will shall be to see
My origin however mean! For her,
She is a woman, proud, and woman's pride
Likes not perhaps a husband humbly got!
I am Luck's child. Deeming myself her son,
I shall not be disowned. She lavishes
Good gifts upon me, she's my nature's mother!
Her moons, my cousins, watched my littleness
Wax and grow great. I'll not deny my nature
But be myself and prove my origin.

CH. To-morrow brings full moon!
All hail, Cithaeron! Hail!

3 ὦ Κιθαιρών, οὐκ ἔσει τὰν αὔριον
4 πανσέληνον, μὴ οὐ σέ γε καὶ πατριώταν Οἰδίπουν
5 καὶ τροφὸν καὶ ματέρ' αὔξειν,
6 καὶ χορεύεσθαι πρὸς ἡμῶν, ὡς ἐπὶ ἦρα φέροντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς τυράννοις.
7 ἰήϊε Φοῖβε, σοὶ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀρέστ' εἴη.

ἀντ. τίς σε, τέκνον, τίς σ' ἔτικτε τᾶν μακραιώνων ἄρα
2 Πανὸς ὀρεσσιβάτα πα-
3 τρὸς πελασθεῖσ'; ἢ σέ γ' εὐνάτειρά τις
4 Λοξίου; τῷ γὰρ πλάκες ἀγρόνομοι πᾶσαι φίλαι·
5 εἴθ' ὁ Κυλλάνας ἀνάσσων,
6 εἴθ' ὁ Βακχεῖος θεὸς ναίων ἐπ' ἄκρων ὀρέων εὕρημα δέξατ' ἔκ του
7 Νυμφᾶν Ἑλικωνίδων, αἷς πλεῖστα συμπαίζει.

ΟΙ. εἰ χρή τι κἀμὲ μὴ συναλλάξαντά πω,
πρέσβεις, σταθμᾶσθαι, τὸν βοτῆρ' ὁρᾶν δοκῶ,
ὃνπερ πάλαι ζητοῦμεν. ἔν τε γὰρ μακρῷ
γήρᾳ ξυνᾴδει τῷδε τἀνδρὶ σύμμετρος,
ἄλλως τε τοὺς ἄγοντας ὥσπερ οἰκέτας
ἔγνωκ' ἐμαυτοῦ· τῇ δ' ἐπιστήμῃ σύ μου
προὔχοις τάχ' ἄν που, τὸν βοτῆρ' ἰδὼν πάρος.
ΧΟ. ἔγνωκα γάρ, σάφ' ἴσθι· Λαΐου γὰρ ἦν
εἴπερ τις ἄλλος πιστὸς ὡς νομεὺς ἀνήρ.
ΟΙ. σὲ πρῶτ' ἐρωτῶ, τὸν Κορίνθιον ξένον.
ἦ τόνδε φράζεις; ΑΓ. τοῦτον, ὃνπερ εἰσορᾷς.
ΟΙ. οὗτος σύ, πρέσβυ, δεῦρό μοι φώνει βλέπων
ὅσ' ἄν σ' ἐρωτῶ. Λαΐου ποτ' ἦσθα σύ;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ.

ἦ, δοῦλος οὐκ ὠνητός, ἀλλ' οἴκοι τραφείς.
ΟΙ. ἔργον μεριμνῶν ποῖον ἢ βίον τίνα;
ΘΕ. ποίμναις τὰ πλεῖστα τοῦ βίου συνειπόμην.

If there be wit in me, or any prophet-power,
To-morrow bringeth thee
Fresh glory. Oedipus the King
Shall sing thy praise and call thee his!
His mother and his nurse!
All Thebes shall dance to thee, and hymn thy hill,
Because it is well-pleasing to the King.
Apollo, hear us! Be this thing thy pleasure too!

Who is thy mother, child?
Is it a maid, perchance,
Of that fair family that grows not old with years,
Embraced upon the hills
By roving Pan? Or else a bride
Of Loxias, who loveth well
All upland pasturage?
Did Hermes, or that dweller on the hills,
Bacchus, from one of Helicon's bright Nymphs,
His chosen playmates, take the child for his delight?

OE. If I may guess—I never met the man—
I think, good friends, yonder I see the herd
Whom we so long have sought. His many years
Confirm it, for they tally with the years
Of this our other witness; and the guides
I know for men of mine. Can *you*, perchance,
Be certain? You have seen, and know the man.
CH. Indeed I know him. Laïus trusted him,
Though but a shepherd, more than other men.
OE. This question first to you, Corinthian:—
Is this the man you mean?
ME. Aye, this is he.
OE. Look hither, sir, and answer everything
That I shall ask. Were you once Laïus' man?

HERDSMAN.

I was, a house-bred servant, no bought slave!
OE. What was your work? What was your way of life?
HE. The chief part of my life I kept the flocks.

ΟΙ. χώροις μάλιστα πρὸς τίσι ξύναυλος ὤν;
ΘΕ. ἦν μὲν Κιθαιρών, ἦν δὲ πρόσχωρος τόπος.
ΟΙ. τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδ' οὖν οἶσθα τῇδέ που μαθών;
ΘΕ. τί χρῆμα δρῶντα; ποῖον ἄνδρα καὶ λέγεις;
ΟΙ. τόνδ' ὃς πάρεστιν·—ἢ ξυναλλάξας τί πω;
ΘΕ. οὐχ ὥστε γ' εἰπεῖν ἐν τάχει μνήμης ὕπο.
ΑΓ. κοὐδέν γε θαῦμα, δέσποτ'· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σαφῶς
ἀγνῶτ' ἀναμνήσω νιν. εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
κάτοιδεν ἧμος τὸν Κιθαιρῶνος τόπον—
ὁ μὲν διπλοῖσι ποιμνίοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἑνὶ—
ἐπλησίαζον τῷδε τἀνδρὶ τρεῖς ὅλους
ἐξ ἦρος εἰς ἀρκτοῦρον ἑκμήνους χρόνους·
χειμῶνα δ' ἤδη τἀμά τ' εἰς ἔπαυλ' ἐγὼ
ἤλαυνον οὗτός τ' εἰς τὰ Λαΐου σταθμά.
λέγω τι τούτων, ἢ οὐ λέγω πεπραγμένον;
ΘΕ. λέγεις ἀληθῆ, καίπερ ἐκ μακροῦ χρόνου.
ΑΓ. φέρ' εἰπὲ νῦν, τότ' οἶσθα παῖδά μοί τινα
δούς, ὡς ἐμαυτῷ θρέμμα θρεψαίμην ἐγώ;
ΘΕ. τί δ' ἔστι; πρὸς τί τοῦτο τοὔπος ἱστορεῖς;
ΑΓ. ὅδ' ἐστίν, ὦ τᾶν, κεῖνος ὃς τότ' ἦν νέος.
ΘΕ. οὐκ εἰς ὄλεθρον; οὐ σιωπήσας ἔσει;
ΟΙ. ἆ, μὴ κόλαζε, πρέσβυ, τόνδ', ἐπεὶ τὰ σὰ
δεῖται κολαστοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ τοῦδ' ἔπη.
ΘΕ. τί δ', ὦ φέριστε δεσποτῶν, ἁμαρτάνω;
ΟΙ. οὐκ ἐννέπων τὸν παῖδ' ὃν οὗτος ἱστορεῖ.
ΘΕ. λέγει γὰρ εἰδὼς οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἄλλως πονεῖ.
ΟΙ. σὺ πρὸς χάριν μὲν οὐκ ἐρεῖς, κλαίων δ' ἐρεῖς.
ΘΕ. μὴ δῆτα, πρὸς θεῶν, τὸν γέροντά μ' αἰκίσῃ.
ΟΙ. οὐχ ὡς τάχος τις τοῦδ' ἀποστρέψει χέρας;
ΘΕ. δύστηνος,—ἀντὶ τοῦ; τί προσχρῄζων μαθεῖν;
ΟΙ. τὸν παῖδ' ἔδωκας τῷδ' ὃν οὗτος ἱστορεῖ;
ΘΕ. ἔδωκ'· ὀλέσθαι δ' ὤφελον τῇδ' ἡμέρᾳ.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ' εἰς τόδ' ἥξεις μὴ λέγων γε τοὔνδικον.

OE. Which were the regions where you camped the most?
HE. Cithaeron—or sometimes the country round.
OE. Ah, then you know this man? You saw him there?
HE. I saw him? Saw him when? What man, my lord?
OE. Yonder!—Did nothing ever pass between you?
HE. No—speaking out of hand, from memory.
ME. Small wonder he forgets! Come, I'll remind
His ignorance, my lord. I make no doubt
He knows that once around Cithaeron's hills
He tended his two flocks—I had but one—
Yet served for company three summer-times,
The six long months from spring to autumn nights.
And when at last the winter came, I drove
Down to my farm, and he to Laïus' folds.
Was it so done as I have said, or no?
HE. 'Tis very long ago. Yes, it is true.
ME. Now tell me this:—You know you gave me once
A boy, to rear him as a child of mine?
HE. What do you mean? Why do you ask me?
ME. Why?
Because, my friend, that child is now your King!
HE. A curse upon you! Silence! Hold your peace.
OE. No, no! You must not chide him, sir! 'Tis you
That should be chid, not he, for speaking so.
HE. Nay, good my master, what is my offence?
OE. This: that you answer nothing—of the child.
HE. 'Tis nothing. He knows nothing. 'Tis but talk.
OE. You will not speak to please me? Pain shall make you!
HE. No! By the gods, hurt me not! I am old.
OE. Come, one of you. Quick! Fasten back his arms!
HE. O Wretched, Wretched! Why? What would you know?
OE. Did you, or did you not, give him the child?
HE. I gave it him. Would I had died that day.
OE. This day you shall, unless you speak the truth.

ΘΕ. πολλῷ γε μᾶλλον, ἢν φράσω, διόλλυμαι.
ΟΙ. ἀνὴρ ὅδ', ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐς τριβὰς ἐλᾷ.
ΘΕ. οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' εἶπον ὡς δοίην πάλαι.
ΟΙ. πόθεν λαβών; οἰκεῖον, ἢ 'ξ ἄλλου τινός;
ΘΕ. ἐμὸν μὲν οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἐδεξάμην δέ του.
ΟΙ. τίνος πολιτῶν τῶνδε κἀκ ποίας στέγης;
ΘΕ. μὴ πρὸς θεῶν, μή, δέσποθ', ἱστόρει πλέον.
ΟΙ. ὄλωλας, εἴ σε ταῦτ' ἐρήσομαι πάλιν.
ΘΕ. τῶν Λαΐου τοίνυν τις ἦν γεννημάτων.
ΟΙ. ἦ δοῦλος, ἢ κείνου τις ἐγγενὴς γεγώς;
ΘΕ. οἴμοι, πρὸς αὐτῷ γ' εἰμὶ τῷ δεινῷ λέγειν.
ΟΙ. κἄγωγ' ἀκούειν· ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀκουστέον.
ΘΕ. κείνου γέ τοι δὴ παῖς ἐκλῄζεθ'· ἡ δ' ἔσω
κάλλιστ' ἂν εἴποι σὴ γυνὴ τάδ' ὡς ἔχει.
ΟΙ. ἦ γὰρ δίδωσιν ἥδε σοι; ΘΕ. μάλιστ', ἄναξ.
ΟΙ. ὡς πρὸς τί χρείας; ΘΕ. ὡς ἀναλώσαιμί νιν.
ΟΙ. τεκοῦσα τλήμων; ΘΕ. θεσφάτων γ' ὄκνῳ κακῶν.
ΟΙ. ποίων; ΘΕ. κτενεῖν νιν τοὺς τεκόντας ἦν λόγος.
ΟΙ. πῶς δῆτ' ἀφῆκας τῷ γέροντι τῷδε σύ;
ΘΕ. κατοικτίσας, ὦ δέσποθ', ὡς ἄλλην χθόνα
δοκῶν ἀποίσειν, αὐτὸς ἔνθεν ἦν· ὁ δὲ
κάκ' ἐς μέγιστ' ἔσωσεν. εἰ γὰρ οὗτος εἶ
ὃν φησιν οὗτος, ἴσθι δύσποτμος γεγώς.
ΟΙ. ἰοὺ ἰού· τὰ πάντ' ἂν ἐξήκοι σαφῆ.
ὦ φῶς, τελευταῖόν σε προσβλέψαιμι νῦν,
ὅστις πέφασμαι φύς τ' ἀφ' ὧν οὐ χρῆν, ξὺν οἷς τ'
οὐ χρῆν ὁμιλῶν, οὕς τέ μ' οὐκ ἔδει κτανών.

στρ. α'. ΧΟ. ἰὼ γενεαὶ βροτῶν,
ὡς ὑμᾶς ἴσα καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ζώσας ἐναριθμῶ.
τίς γάρ, τίς ἀνὴρ πλέον
τᾶς εὐδαιμονίας φέρει
ἢ τοσοῦτον ὅσον δοκεῖν
καὶ δόξαντ' ἀποκλῖναι;

HE. Alas! And if I speak, 'tis worse, far worse.
OE. Ah! So the fellow means to trifle with us!
HE. No, No! I have confessed I gave it him.
OE. How came you by it? Was the child your own?
HE. No, 'twas not mine. Another gave it me.
OE. Another? Who, and of what house in Thebes?
HE. Nay, for the gods' love, Master, ask no more.
OE. Make me repeat my question, and you die!
HE. The answer is:—a child of Laïus' house.
OE. Slave born? Or kinsman to the royal blood?
HE. Alas!
So it has come, the thing I dread to tell.
OE. The thing I dread to hear. Yet I must hear it.
HE. Thus then:—they said 'twas...Laïus' son....And yet
Perhaps Jocasta best can answer that.
OE. Jocasta gave it you?
HE. She gave it me.
OE. For what?
HE. She bade me do away with it.
OE. Its mother! Could she?
HE. Fearing prophecies—
OE. What prophecies?
HE. His father he must kill!
OE. And yet you let this old man take him? Why?
HE. 'Twas pity, sir. I thought: he dwells afar,
And takes him to some distant home. But he
Saved him to suffer! If you are the child
He saith, no man is more unfortunate.
OE. Alas! It comes! It comes! And all is true!
Light! Let me look my last on thee, for I
Stand naked now. Shamefully was I born:
In shame I wedded: to my shame I slew.

CH. Ah! Generations of mankind!
Living, I count your life as nothingness.
None hath more of happiness,
None that mortal is, than this:
But to seem to be, and then,
Having seemed, to fail.

7 τὸν σόν τοι παράδειγμ᾽ ἔχων,
8 τὸν σὸν δαίμονα, τὸν σόν, ὦ τλᾶμον Οἰδιπόδα, βροτῶν
9 οὐδὲν μακαρίζω· 1196

ἀντ. α΄. ὅστις καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὰν
2 τοξεύσας ἐκράτησε τοῦ πάντ᾽ εὐδαίμονος ὄλβου,
3 ὦ Ζεῦ, κατὰ μὲν φθίσας
4 τὰν γαμψώνυχα παρθένον
5 χρησμῳδόν, θανάτων δ᾽ ἐμᾷ 1200
6 χώρᾳ πύργος ἀνέστα·
7 ἐξ οὗ καὶ βασιλεὺς καλεῖ
8 ἐμὸς καὶ τὰ μέγιστ᾽ ἐτιμάθης, ταῖς μεγάλαισιν ἐν
9 Θήβαισιν ἀνάσσων.

στρ. β΄. τανῦν δ᾽ ἀκούειν τίς ἀθλιώτερος; 1204
2 τίς ἄταις ἀγρίαις, τίς ἐν πόνοις
3 ξύνοικος ἀλλαγᾷ βίου;
4 ἰὼ κλεινὸν Οἰδίπου κάρα,
5 ᾧ μέγας λιμὴν 1208
6 αὐτὸς ἤρκεσεν
7 παιδὶ καὶ πατρὶ θαλαμηπόλῳ πεσεῖν,
8 πῶς ποτε πῶς ποθ᾽ αἱ πατρῷαί σ᾽ ἄλοκες φέρειν, τάλας,
9 σῖγ᾽ ἐδυνάθησαν ἐς τοσόνδε;

ἀντ. β΄. ἐφεῦρέ σ᾽ ἄκονθ᾽ ὁ πάνθ᾽ ὁρῶν χρόνος· 1213
2 δικάζει τὸν ἄγαμον γάμον πάλαι
3 τεκνοῦντα καὶ τεκνούμενον. 1215
4 ἰὼ Λαΐειον <ὦ> τέκνον,
5 εἴθε σ᾽ εἴθε σε
6 μήποτ᾽ εἰδόμαν.
7 δύρομαι γὰρ ὥσπερ ἰάλεμον χέων
8 ἐκ στομάτων. τὸ δ᾽ ὀρθὸν εἰπεῖν, ἀνέπνευσά τ᾽ ἐκ σέθεν
9 καὶ κατεκοίμησα τοὐμὸν ὄμμα. 1222

Thine, O unhappy Oedipus,
Thine is the fatal destiny,
That bids me call no mortal creature blest.

Zeus! To the very height of wit
He shot, and won the prize of perfect life;
Conqueror that slew the maid,
Who, with crooked claw and tongue
Riddling, brought us death, when he
Rose and gave us life.
That day it was that hailed thee King,
Preferred above mankind in state
And honour, Master of the Might of Thebes.

To-day, alas! no tale so sad as thine!
No man whom changing life hath lodged
So close with Hell, and all her plagues, and all her sorrowing!
Woe for the Fame of Oedipus!
For the Son hath lain where the Father lay,
And the bride of one is the bride of both.
How could the field that the father sowed endure him
So silently so long?

Time knoweth all. Spite of thy purposing,
Time hath discovered thee, to judge
The monstrous mating that defiled the father through the son.
Woe for the babe that Laïus got.
And I would I never had looked on thee,
And the songs I sing are a dirge for thee.
This is the end of the matter: he that saved me,
Hath made me desolate.

ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ.

ὦ γῆς μέγιστα τῆσδ' ἀεὶ τιμώμενοι,
οἷ' ἔργ' ἀκούσεσθ', οἷα δ' εἰσόψεσθ', ὅσον δ'
ἀρεῖσθε πένθος, εἴπερ ἐγγενῶς ἔτι
τῶν Λαβδακείων ἐντρέπεσθε δωμάτων.
οἶμαι γὰρ οὔτ' ἂν Ἴστρον οὔτε Φᾶσιν ἂν
νίψαι καθαρμῷ τήνδε τὴν στέγην, ὅσα
κεύθει, τὰ δ' αὐτίκ' εἰς τὸ φῶς φανεῖ κακὰ
ἑκόντα κοὐκ ἄκοντα. τῶν δὲ πημονῶν
μάλιστα λυποῦσ' αἳ φανῶσ' αὐθαίρετοι.

ΧΟ. λείπει μὲν οὐδ' ἃ πρόσθεν ᾔδειμεν τὸ μὴ οὐ
βαρύστον' εἶναι· πρὸς δ' ἐκείνοισιν τί φής;

ΕΞ. ὁ μὲν τάχιστος τῶν λόγων εἰπεῖν τε καὶ
μαθεῖν, τέθνηκε θεῖον Ἰοκάστης κάρα.

ΧΟ. ὦ δυστάλαινα, πρὸς τίνος ποτ' αἰτίας;

ΕΞ. αὐτὴ πρὸς αὑτῆς. τῶν δὲ πραχθέντων τὰ μὲν
ἄλγιστ' ἄπεστιν· ἡ γὰρ ὄψις οὐ πάρα.
ὅμως δ', ὅσον γε κἀν ἐμοὶ μνήμης ἔνι,
πεύσει τὰ κείνης ἀθλίας παθήματα.
ὅπως γὰρ ὀργῇ χρωμένη παρῆλθ' ἔσω
θυρῶνος, ἵετ' εὐθὺ πρὸς τὰ νυμφικὰ
λέχη, κόμην σπῶσ' ἀμφιδεξίοις ἀκμαῖς·
πύλας δ', ὅμως εἰσῆλθ', ἐπιρράξασ' ἔσω
καλεῖ τὸν ἤδη Λάϊον πάλαι νεκρόν,
μνήμην παλαιῶν σπερμάτων ἔχουσ', ὑφ' ὧν
θάνοι μὲν αὐτός, τὴν δὲ τίκτουσαν λίποι
τοῖς οἷσιν αὐτοῦ δύστεκνον παιδουργίαν.
γοᾶτο δ' εὐνάς, ἔνθα δύστηνος διπλοῦς
ἐξ ἀνδρὸς ἄνδρα καὶ τέκν' ἐκ τέκνων τέκοι.
χὤπως μὲν ἐκ τῶνδ' οὐκέτ' οἶδ' ἀπόλλυται·
βοῶν γὰρ εἰσέπαισεν Οἰδίπους, ὑφ' οὗ
οὐκ ἦν τὸ κείνης ἐκθεάσασθαι κακόν,
ἀλλ' εἰς ἐκεῖνον περιπολοῦντ' ἐλεύσσομεν.

MESSENGER FROM THE PALACE.

Great Lords, that keep the dignities of Thebes,
What doings must ye hear, what sights must see,
And oh! what grief must bear, if ye are true
To Cadmus and the breed of Labdacus!
Can Ister or can Phasis wash this house—
I trow not—, with their waters, from the guilt
It hides....Yet soon shall publish to the light
Fresh, not unpurposed evil. 'Tis the woe
That we ourselves have compassed, hurts the most.

CH. That which we knew already, was enough
For lamentation. What have you besides?

ME. This is the briefest tale for me to tell,
For you to hear:—your Queen Jocasta's dead.

CH. Alas! Poor lady! Dead! What was the cause?

ME. She died by her own hand. Of what befel
The worst is not for you, who saw it not.
Yet shall you hear, so much as memory
Remains in me, the sad Queen's tragedy.
When in her passionate agony she passed
Beyond those portals, straight to her bridal-room
She ran, and ever tore her hair the while;
Clashed fast the doors behind her; and within,
Cried to her husband Laïus in the grave,
With mention of that seed whereby he sowed
Death for himself, and left to her a son
To get on her fresh children, shamefully.
So wept she for her bridal's double woe,
Husband of husband got, and child of child.
And after that—I know not how—she died.
We could not mark her sorrows to the end,
For, with a shout, Oedipus broke on us,
And all had eyes for him. Hither he rushed

φοιτᾷ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἔγχος ἐξαιτῶν πορεῖν,
γυναῖκά τ᾽ οὐ γυναῖκα, μητρῴαν δ᾽ ὅπου
κίχοι διπλῆν ἄρουραν οὖ τε καὶ τέκνων.
λυσσῶντι δ᾽ αὐτῷ δαιμόνων δείκνυσί τις·
οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀνδρῶν οἳ παρῆμεν ἐγγύθεν.
δεινὸν δ᾽ ἀΰσας, ὡς ὑφηγητοῦ τινος,
πύλαις διπλαῖς ἐνήλατ᾽· ἐκ δὲ πυθμένων
ἔκλινε κοῖλα κλῆθρα κἀμπίπτει στέγῃ.
οὗ δὴ κρεμαστὴν τὴν γυναῖκ᾽ ἐσείδομεν,
πλεκταῖσιν αἰώραισιν ἐμπεπλεγμένην.
ὁ δ᾽ ὡς ὁρᾷ νιν, δεινὰ βρυχηθεὶς τάλας
χαλᾷ κρεμαστὴν ἀρτάνην. ἐπεὶ δὲ γῇ
ἔκειτο τλήμων, δεινὰ δ᾽ ἦν τἀνθένδ᾽ ὁρᾶν.
ἀποσπάσας γὰρ εἱμάτων χρυσηλάτους
περόνας ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς, αἷσιν ἐξεστέλλετο,
ἄρας, ἔπαισεν ἄρθρα τῶν αὑτοῦ κύκλων,
αὐδῶν τοιαῦθ᾽, ὁθούνεκ᾽ οὐκ ὄψοιντό νιν
οὔθ᾽ οἷ᾽ ἔπασχεν οὔθ᾽ ὁποῖ᾽ ἔδρα κακά,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν σκότῳ τὸ λοιπὸν οὓς μὲν οὐκ ἔδει
ὀψοίαθ᾽, οὓς δ᾽ ἔχρῃζεν οὐ γνωσοίατο.
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἐφυμνῶν πολλάκις τε κοὐχ ἅπαξ
ἤρασσ᾽ ἐπαίρων βλέφαρα· φοίνιαι δ᾽ ὁμοῦ
γλῆναι γένει᾽ ἔτεγγον, οὐδ᾽ ἀνίεσαν
φόνου μυδώσας σταγόνας, ἀλλ᾽ ὁμοῦ μέλας
ὄμβρος χαλάζης αἱματοῦς ἐτέγγετο....
τάδ᾽ ἐκ δυοῖν ἔρρωγεν οὐ μόνου κάτα,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ συμμιγῆ κακά.
ὁ πρὶν παλαιὸς δ᾽ ὄλβος ἦν πάροιθε μὲν
ὄλβος δικαίως· νῦν δὲ τῇδε θἠμέρᾳ
στεναγμός, ἄτη, θάνατος, αἰσχύνη, κακῶν
ὅσ᾽ ἐστὶ πάντων ὀνόματ᾽, οὐδέν ἐστ᾽ ἀπόν.

ΧΟ. νῦν δ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὁ τλήμων ἔν τινι σχολῇ κακοῦ;

ΕΞ. βοᾷ διοίγειν κλῆθρα καὶ δηλοῦν τινα

And thither. For a sword he begged, and cried:
'Where is that wife that mothered in one womb
Her husband and his children! Show her me!
No wife of mine!' As thus he raged, some god—
'Twas none of us—guided him where she lay.
And he, as guided, with a terrible shout,
Leapt at her double door; free of the bolts
Burst back the yielding bar,—and was within.
And there we saw Jocasta. By a noose
Of swaying cords, caught and entwined, she hung.
He too has seen her—with a moaning cry
Looses the hanging trap, and on the ground
Has laid her. Then—Oh, sight most terrible!—
He snatched the golden brooches from the queen,
With which her robe was fastened, lifted them,
And struck. Deep to the very founts of sight
He smote, and vowed those eyes no more should see
The wrongs he suffered, and the wrong he did.
'Henceforth,' he cried, 'be dark!—since ye have seen
Whom ye should ne'er have seen, and never knew
Them that I longed to find.' So chanted he,
And raised the pins again, and yet again,
And every time struck home. Blood from the eyes
Sprinkled his beard, and still fresh clammy drops
Welled in a shower unceasing, nay, a storm
With blood for rain, and hail of clotting gore.
So from these twain hath evil broken; so
Are wife and husband mingled in one woe.
Justly their ancient happiness was known
For happiness indeed; and lo! to-day—
Tears and Disasters, Death and Shame, and all
The Ills the world hath names for—all are here.

CH. And hath he found some respite now from pain?

ME. He shouts, and bids open the doors, and show

τοῖς πᾶσι Καδμείοισι τὸν πατροκτόνον,
τὸν μητρός—αὐδῶν ἀνόσι᾽ οὐδὲ ῥητά μοι—
ὡς ἐκ χθονὸς ῥίψων ἑαυτόν, οὐδ᾽ ἔτι
μενῶν δόμοις ἀραῖος, ὡς ἠράσατο.
ῥώμης γε μέντοι καὶ προηγητοῦ τινος
δεῖται· τὸ γὰρ νόσημα μεῖζον ἢ φέρειν.
δείξει δὲ καὶ σοί· κληῖθρα γὰρ πυλῶν τάδε
διοίγεται· θέαμα δ᾽ εἰσόψει τάχα
τοιοῦτον οἷον καὶ στυγοῦντ᾽ ἐποικτίσαι.

κομμός. ΧΟ. ὦ δεινὸν ἰδεῖν πάθος ἀνθρώποις,
ὦ δεινότατον πάντων ὅσ᾽ ἐγὼ
προσέκυρσ᾽ ἤδη. τίς σ᾽, ὦ τλῆμον,
προσέβη μανία; τίς ὁ πηδήσας
μείζονα δαίμων τῶν μακίστων
πρὸς σῇ δυσδαίμονι μοίρᾳ;
φεῦ φεῦ, δύστανος.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐσιδεῖν δύναμαί σ᾽, ἐθέλων
πόλλ᾽ ἀνερέσθαι, πολλὰ πυθέσθαι,
πολλὰ δ᾽ ἀθρῆσαι·
τοίαν φρίκην παρέχεις μοι.

ΟΙ. αἰαῖ, φεῦ φεῦ, δύστανος ἐγώ,
ποῖ γᾶς φέρομαι τλάμων; πᾶ μοι
φθογγὰ διαπωτᾶται φοράδην;
ἰὼ δαῖμον, ἵν᾽ ἐξήλου.

ΧΟ. ἐς δεινόν, οὐδ᾽ ἀκουστόν, οὐδ᾽ ἐπόψιμον.

στρ. α΄. ΟΙ. 1 ἰὼ σκότου
2 νέφος ἐμὸν ἀπότροπον, ἐπιπλόμενον ἄφατον,
3 ἀδάματόν τε καὶ δυσούριστον <ὄν.>
4 οἴμοι,
5 οἴμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις· οἷον εἰσέδυ μ᾽ ἅμα
6 κέντρων τε τῶνδ᾽ οἴστρημα καὶ μνήμη κακῶν.

ΧΟ. 7 καὶ θαῦμά γ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐν τοσοῖσδε πήμασιν
8 διπλᾶ σε πενθεῖν καὶ διπλᾶ φέρειν κακά.

To all his Thebes this father-murderer,
This mother—Leave the word. It is not clean.
He would be gone from Thebes, nor stay to see
His home accurséd by the curse he swore;
Yet hath he not the strength. He needs a guide,
Seeing his griefs are more than man can bear.
Nay, he himself will show you. Look! The gates
Fall open, and the sight that you shall see
Is such that even hate must pity it.

CH. O sight for all the world to see
Most terrible! O suffering
Of all mine eyes have seen most terrible!
Alas! What Fury came on thee?
What evil Spirit, from afar,
O Oedipus! O wretched!
Leapt on thee, to destroy?

I cannot even Alas! look
Upon thy face, though much I have
To ask of thee, and much to hear,
Aye, and to see—I cannot!
Such terror is in thee!

OE. Alas! O Wretched! Whither go
My steps? My voice? It seems to float
Far, far away from me.
Alas! Curse of my Life, how far
Thy leap hath carried thee!

CH. To sorrows none can bear to see or hear.

OE. Ah! The cloud!
Visitor unspeakable! Darkness upon me horrible!
Unconquerable! Cloud that may not ever pass away!
Alas!
And yet again, alas! How deep they stab—
These throbbing pains, and all those memories.

CH. Where such afflictions are, I marvel not,
If soul and body make one doubled woe.

ἀντ. α'. ΟΙ. 1 ἰὼ φίλος,
2 σὺ μὲν ἐμὸς ἐπίπολος ἔτι μόνιμος· ἔτι γὰρ
3 ὑπομένεις με τὸν τυφλὸν κηδεύων.
4 φεῦ φεῦ·
5 οὐ γάρ με λήθεις, ἀλλὰ γιγνώσκω σαφῶς,
6 καίπερ σκοτεινός, τήν γε σὴν αὐδὴν ὅμως.
ΧΟ. 7 ὦ δεινὰ δράσας, πῶς ἔτλης τοιαῦτα σὰς
8 ὄψεις μαρᾶναι; τίς σ' ἐπῆρε δαιμόνων;

στρ. β'. ΟΙ. 1 Ἀπόλλων τάδ' ἦν, Ἀπόλλων, φίλοι,
2 ὁ κακὰ κακὰ τελῶν ἐμὰ τάδ' ἐμὰ πάθεα.
3 ἔπαισε δ' αὐτόχειρ νιν οὔτις, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τλάμων.
4 τί γὰρ ἔδει μ' ὁρᾶν,
5 ὅτῳ γ' ὁρῶντι μηδὲν ἦν ἰδεῖν γλυκύ;
ΧΟ. 6 ἦν ταῦθ' ὅπωσπερ καὶ σὺ φής.
ΟΙ. 7 τί δῆτ' ἐμοὶ βλεπτόν, ἢ
8 στερκτόν, ἢ προσήγορον
9 ἔτ' ἔστ' ἀκούειν ἡδονᾷ, φίλοι;
10 ἀπάγετ' ἐκτόπιον ὅτι τάχιστά με,
11 ἀπάγετ', ὦ φίλοι, τὸν μέγ' ὀλέθριον,
12 τὸν καταρατότατον, ἔτι δὲ καὶ θεοῖς
13 ἐχθρότατον βροτῶν.
ΧΟ. 14 δείλαιε τοῦ νοῦ τῆς τε συμφορᾶς ἴσον,
15 ὡς σ' ἠθέλησα μηδὲ ἀναγνῶναί ποτε.

ἀντ. β'. ΟΙ. 1 ὄλοιθ' ὅστις ἦν ὃς ἀγρίας πέδας
2 †νομάδ'† ἐπιποδίας ἔλυσ' ἀπό τε φόνου
3 ἔρρυτο κἀνέσωσέ μ', οὐδὲν εἰς χάριν πράσσων.
4 τότε γὰρ ἂν θανὼν
5 οὐκ ἦν φίλοισιν οὐδ' ἐμοὶ τοσόνδ' ἄχος.
ΧΟ. 6 θέλοντι κἀμοὶ τοῦτ' ἂν ἦν.
ΟΙ. 7 οὔκουν πατρός γ' ἂν φονεὺς
8 ἦλθον, οὐδὲ νυμφίος
9 βροτοῖς ἐκλήθην ὧν ἔφυν ἄπο.

OE. Ah! My friend!
Still remains thy friendship. Still thine is the help that comforts me,
And kindness, that can look upon these dreadful eyes unchanged.
Ah me!
My friend, I feel thy presence. Though mine eyes
Be darkened, yet I hear thy voice, and know.
CH. Oh, dreadful deed! How wert thou steeled to quench
Thy vision thus? What Spirit came on thee?

OE. Apollo! 'Twas Apollo, friends,
Willed the evil, willed, and brought the agony to pass!
And yet the hand that struck was mine, mine only, wretched.
Why should I see, whose eyes
Had no more any good to look upon?
CH. 'Twas even as thou sayest.
OE. Aye. For me.—Nothing is left for sight,
Nor anything to love:
Nor shall the sound of greetings any more
Fall pleasant on my ear.
Away! Away! Out of the land, away!
Banishment, Banishment! Fatal am I, accursed,
And the hate on me, as on no man else, of the gods!
CH. Unhappy in thy fortune and the wit
That shows it thee. Would thou hadst never known.

OE. A curse upon the hand that loosed
In the wilderness the cruel fetters of my feet,
Rescued me, gave me life. Ah! Cruel was his pity,
Since, had I died, so much
I had not harmed myself and all I love.
CH. Aye, even so 'twere better.
OE. Aye, for life never had led me then
To shed my father's blood;
Men had not called me husband of the wife
That bore me in the womb.

νῦν δ' ἄθεος μέν εἰμ', ἀνοσίων δὲ παῖς,
ὁμογενὴς δ' ἀφ' ὧν αὐτὸς ἔφυν τάλας.
εἰ δέ τι πρεσβύτερον ἔτι κακοῦ κακόν,
τοῦτ' ἔλαχ' Οἰδίπους.

ΧΟ. οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως σε φῶ βεβουλεῦσθαι καλῶς·
κρείσσων γὰρ ἦσθα μηκέτ' ὢν ἢ ζῶν τυφλός.

ΟΙ. ὡς μὲν τάδ' οὐχ ὧδ' ἔστ' ἄριστ' εἰργασμένα,
μή μ' ἐκδίδασκε, μηδὲ συμβούλευ' ἔτι.
ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ οἶδ' ὄμμασιν ποίοις βλέπων
πατέρα ποτ' ἂν προσεῖδον εἰς Ἅιδου μολών,
οὐδ' αὖ τάλαιναν μητέρ', οἷν ἐμοὶ δυοῖν
ἔργ' ἐστὶ κρείσσον' ἀγχόνης εἰργασμένα.
ἀλλ' ἡ τέκνων δῆτ' ὄψις ἦν ἐφίμερος,
βλαστοῦσ' ὅπως ἔβλαστε, προσλεύσσειν ἐμοί;
οὐ δῆτα τοῖς γ' ἐμοῖσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ποτε·
οὐδ' ἄστυ γ', οὐδὲ πύργος, οὐδὲ δαιμόνων
ἀγάλματ' ἱερά, τῶν ὁ παντλήμων ἐγὼ
κάλλιστ' ἀνὴρ εἷς ἔν γε ταῖς Θήβαις τραφεὶς
ἀπεστέρησ' ἐμαυτόν, αὐτὸς ἐννέπων
ὠθεῖν ἅπαντας τὸν ἀσεβῆ, τὸν ἐκ θεῶν
φανέντ' ἄναγνον καὶ—γένους τοῦ Λαΐου.
τοιάνδ' ἐγὼ κηλῖδα μηνύσας ἐμὴν
ὀρθοῖς ἔμελλον ὄμμασιν τούτους ὁρᾶν;
ἥκιστά γ'· ἀλλ' εἰ τῆς ἀκουούσης ἔτ' ἦν
πηγῆς δι' ὤτων φραγμός, οὐκ ἂν ἐσχόμην
τὸ μὴ ἀποκλῆσαι τοὐμὸν ἄθλιον δέμας,
ἵν' ἦ τυφλός τε καὶ κλύων μηδέν· τὸ γὰρ
τὴν φροντίδ' ἔξω τῶν κακῶν οἰκεῖν γλυκύ.
ἰὼ Κιθαιρών, τί μ' ἐδέχου; τί μ' οὐ λαβὼν
ἔκτεινας εὐθύς, ὡς ἔδειξα μήποτε
ἐμαυτὸν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔνθεν ἦ γεγώς;
ὦ Πολύβε καὶ Κόρινθε καὶ τὰ πάτρια
λόγῳ παλαιὰ δώμαθ', οἷον ἆρά με

But now—but now.—Godless am I, the son
Born of impurity, mate of my father's bed,
And if worse there be, I am Oedipus! It is mine!

CH. In this I know not how to call thee wise,
For better wert thou dead than living—blind.

OE. Nay, give me no more counsel. Bid me not
Believe my deed, thus done, is not well done.
I know 'tis well. When I had passed the grave,
How could those eyes have met my father's gaze,
Or my unhappy mother's—since on both
I have done wrongs beyond all other wrong?
Or live and see my children?—Children born
As they were born! What pleasure in that sight?
None for these eyes of mine, for ever, none.
Nor in the sight of Thebes, her castles, shrines
And images of the gods, whereof, alas!
I robbed myself—myself, I spoke that word,
I that she bred and nurtured, I her prince,
And bade her thrust the sinner out, the man
Proved of the gods polluted—Laïus' son.
When such a stain by my own evidence
Was on me, could I raise my eyes to them?
No! Had I means to stop my ears, and choke
The wells of sound, I had not held my hand,
But closed my body like a prison-house
To hearing as to sight. Sweet for the mind
To dwell withdrawn, where troubles could not come.
Cithaeron! Ah, why didst thou welcome me?
Why, when thou hadst me there, didst thou not kill,
Never to show the world myself—my birth!
O Polybus, and Corinth, and the home
Men called my father's ancient house, what sores

κάλλος κακῶν ὕπουλον ἐξεθρέψατε.
νῦν γὰρ κακός τ' ὢν κἀκ κακῶν εὑρίσκομαι.
ὦ τρεῖς κέλευθοι καὶ κεκρυμμένη νάπη
δρυμός τε καὶ στενωπὸς ἐν τριπλαῖς ὁδοῖς,
αἳ τοὐμὸν αἷμα τῶν ἐμῶν χειρῶν ἄπο
ἐπίετε πατρός, ἆρά μου μέμνησθέ τι,
οἵ' ἔργα δράσας ὑμὶν εἶτα δεῦρ' ἰὼν
ὁποῖ' ἔπρασσον αὖθις; ὦ γάμοι γάμοι,
ἐφύσαθ' ἡμᾶς, καὶ φυτεύσαντες πάλιν
ἀνεῖτε ταὐτοῦ σπέρμα, κἀπεδείξατε
πατέρας, ἀδελφούς, παῖδας, αἷμ' ἐμφύλιον,
νύμφας γυναῖκας μητέρας τε, χὤπόσα
αἴσχιστ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔργα γίγνεται.
ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ αὐδᾶν ἔσθ' ἃ μηδὲ δρᾶν καλόν,
ὅπως τάχιστα πρὸς θεῶν ἔξω μέ που
καλύψατ', ἢ φονεύσατ', ἢ θαλάσσιον
ἐκρίψατ', ἔνθα μήποτ' εἰσόψεσθ' ἔτι.
ἴτ', ἀξιώσατ' ἀνδρὸς ἀθλίου θιγεῖν·
πίθεσθε, μὴ δείσητε· τἀμὰ γὰρ κακὰ
οὐδεὶς οἷός τε πλὴν ἐμοῦ φέρειν βροτῶν.
ΧΟ. ἀλλ' ὧν ἐπαιτεῖς ἐς δέον πάρεσθ' ὅδε
Κρέων τὸ πράσσειν καὶ τὸ βουλεύειν, ἐπεὶ
χώρας λέλειπται μοῦνος ἀντὶ σοῦ φύλαξ.
ΟΙ. οἴμοι, τί δῆτα λέξομεν πρὸς τόνδ' ἔπος;
τίς μοι φανεῖται πίστις ἔνδικος; τὰ γὰρ
πάρος πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντ' ἐφεύρημαι κακός.
ΚΡ. οὐχ ὡς γελαστής, Οἰδίπους, ἐλήλυθα,
οὐδ' ὡς ὀνειδιῶν τι τῶν πάρος κακῶν....
ἀλλ' εἰ τὰ θνητῶν μὴ καταισχύνεσθ' ἔτι
γένεθλα, τὴν γοῦν πάντα βόσκουσαν φλόγα
αἰδεῖσθ' ἄνακτος Ἡλίου, τοιόνδ' ἄγος
ἀκάλυπτον οὕτω δεικνύναι, τὸ μήτε γῆ
μήτ' ὄμβρος ἱερὸς μήτε φῶς προσδέξεται.

Festered beneath that beauty that ye reared,
Discovered now, sin out of sin begot.
O ye three roads, O secret mountain-glen,
Trees, and a pathway narrowed to the place
Where met the three, do you remember me?
I gave you blood to drink, my father's blood,
And so my own! Do you remember that?
The deed I wrought for you? Then, how I passed
Hither to other deeds?
O Marriage-bed
That gave me birth, and, having borne me, gave
Fresh children to your seed, and showed the world
Father, son, brother, mingled and confused,
Bride, mother, wife in one, and all the shame
Of deeds the foulest ever known to man.
No. Silence for a deed so ill to do
Is better. Therefore lead me hence, away!
To hide me or to kill. Or to the sea
Cast me, where you shall look on me no more.
Come! Deign to touch me, though I am a man
Accurséd. Yield! Fear nothing! Mine are woes
That no man else, but I alone, must bear.

CH. Nay, for your prayer, look! in good season comes
Creon, for act or counsel. In your place
He stands, the sole protector of the land.

OE. Alas! What words have I for him? What plea
That I can justify? Since all the past
Stands proved, and shows me only false to him.

CR. I come not, Oedipus, in mockery,
Nor with reproach for evils that are past.—
Nay, if ye have no reverence for man,
Have ye no shame before our Lord the Sun,
Who feeds the world with light, to show unveiled
A thing polluted so, that neither Earth
Nor Light nor Heaven's rain may welcome it.

ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἐς οἶκον ἐσκομίζετε·
τοῖς ἐν γένει γὰρ τἀγγενῆ μάλισθ᾽ ὁρᾶν
μόνοις τ᾽ ἀκούειν εὐσεβῶς ἔχει κακά.
ΟΙ. πρὸς θεῶν, ἐπείπερ ἐλπίδος μ᾽ ἀπέσπασας,
ἄριστος ἐλθὼν πρὸς κάκιστον ἄνδρ᾽ ἐμέ,
πιθοῦ τί μοι· πρὸς σοῦ γάρ, οὐδ᾽ ἐμοῦ, φράσω.
ΚΡ. καὶ τοῦ με χρείας ὧδε λιπαρεῖς τυχεῖν;
ΟΙ. ῥῖψόν με γῆς ἐκ τῆσδ᾽ ὅσον τάχισθ᾽, ὅπου
θνητῶν φανοῦμαι μηδενὸς προσήγορος.
ΚΡ. ἔδρασ᾽ ἂν εὖ τοῦτ᾽ ἴσθ᾽ ἄν, εἰ μὴ τοῦ θεοῦ
πρώτιστ᾽ ἔχρῃζον ἐκμαθεῖν τί πρακτέον.
ΟΙ. ἀλλ᾽ ἦ γ᾽ ἐκείνου πᾶσ᾽ ἐδηλώθη φάτις,
τὸν πατροφόντην, τὸν ἀσεβῆ μ᾽ ἀπολλύναι.
ΚΡ. οὕτως ἐλέχθη ταῦθ᾽· ὅμως δ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἔσταμεν
χρείας, ἄμεινον ἐκμαθεῖν τί δραστέον.
ΟΙ. οὕτως ἄρ᾽ ἀνδρὸς ἀθλίου πεύσεσθ᾽ ὕπερ;
ΚΡ. καὶ γὰρ σὺ νῦν τᾶν τῷ θεῷ πίστιν φέροις.
ΟΙ. καὶ σοί γ᾽ ἐπισκήπτω τε καὶ προστρέψομαι,
τῆς μὲν κατ᾽ οἴκους αὐτὸς ὃν θέλεις τάφον
θοῦ· καὶ γὰρ ὀρθῶς τῶν γε σῶν τελεῖς ὕπερ·
ἐμοῦ δὲ μήποτ᾽ ἀξιωθήτω τόδε
πατρῷον ἄστυ ζῶντος οἰκητοῦ τυχεῖν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔα με ναίειν ὄρεσιν, ἔνθα κλῄζεται
οὐμὸς Κιθαιρὼν οὗτος, ὃν μήτηρ τέ μοι
πατήρ τ᾽ ἐθέσθην ζῶντε κύριον τάφον,
ἵν᾽ ἐξ ἐκείνων, οἵ μ᾽ ἀπωλλύτην, θάνω.
καίτοι τοσοῦτόν γ᾽ οἶδα, μήτε μ᾽ ἂν νόσον
μήτ᾽ ἄλλο πέρσαι μηδέν· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε
θνῄσκων ἐσώθην, μὴ ᾽πί τῳ δεινῷ κακῷ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἡ μὲν ἡμῶν μοῖρ᾽, ὁποιπερ εἶσ᾽, ἴτω·
παίδων δὲ τῶν μὲν ἀρσένων μή μοι, Κρέον,
προσθῇ μέριμναν· ἄνδρες εἰσίν, ὥστε μὴ
σπάνιν ποτὲ σχεῖν, ἔνθ᾽ ἂν ὦσι, τοῦ βίου·

Stay not. Convey him quickly to his home:
Save his own kindred, none should see nor hear—
So piety enjoins—a kinsman's woe.

OE. Ah, since thou hast belied my thought and come
As noblest among men to me, so vile,
Grant me one boon, for thine own weal, not mine.

CR. What is thy prayer? What boon can I bestow?

OE. Cast me from Thebes, aye, cast me quickly forth
Where none may see, and no man speak with me.

CR. This had I done, be sure, save that I first
Would ask the god what thing is right to do.

OE. His word was published, and 'twas plain:—'Destroy
The guilty one, the parricide!'—'tis I!

CR. So runs the word: and yet, to ask the god
For guidance in such utter need is best.

OE. What? Will you ask for one so lost as I?

CR. Surely, and you will now believe the god.

OE. Aye, and on thee I lay this charge, this prayer:
For her that is within make burial
As pleaseth thee. 'Tis fitting. She is thine.
For me, ah! never doom this land of Thebes,
My father's town, to harbour me alive.
Leave me to haunt the mountains, where the name
Is known of my Cithaeron—proper tomb
By mother and by father set apart
For me, their living child. So let me die
Their victim still that would have slain me there.
And yet this much I know. There is no hurt
Nor sickness that can end me. Since from death
I lived, it was to finish some strange woe....
So let my Fortune, where it goeth, go!
But for my children, Creon,—for the sons
Think not at all. Men are they; anywhere
Can live, and find sufficiency for life.

τοῖν δ' ἀθλίαιν οἰκτραῖν τε παρθένοιν ἐμαῖν,
οἷν οὔποθ' ἡμὴ χωρὶς ἐστάθη βορᾶς
τράπεζ' ἄνευ τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ὅσων ἐγὼ
ψαύοιμι, πάντων τῶνδ' ἀεὶ μετειχέτην·
οἷν μοι μέλεσθαι· καὶ μάλιστα μὲν χεροῖν
ψαῦσαί μ' ἔασον κἀποκλαύσασθαι κακά.
ἴθ' ὦναξ,
ἴθ' ὦ γονῇ γενναῖε. χερσί τἂν θιγὼν
δοκοῖμ' ἔχειν σφας, ὥσπερ ἡνίκ' ἔβλεπον.
τί φημί;
οὐ δὴ κλύω που πρὸς θεῶν τοῖν μοι φίλοιν
δακρυρροούντοιν, καί μ' ἐποικτείρας Κρέων
ἔπεμψέ μοι τὰ φίλτατ' ἐκγόνοιν ἐμοῖν;
λέγω τι;

ΚΡ. λέγεις· ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμ' ὁ πορσύνας τάδε,
γνοὺς τὴν παροῦσαν τέρψιν, ἣ σ' εἶχεν πάλαι.

ΟΙ. ἀλλ' εὐτυχοίης, καί σε τῆσδε τῆς ὁδοῦ
δαίμων ἄμεινον ἢ 'μὲ φρουρήσας τύχοι.
ὦ τέκνα, ποῦ ποτ' ἐστέ; δεῦρ' ἴτ', ἔλθετε
ὡς τὰς ἀδελφὰς τάσδε τὰς ἐμὰς χέρας,
αἳ τοῦ φυτουργοῦ πατρὸς ὑμὶν ὧδ' ὁρᾶν
τὰ πρόσθε λαμπρὰ προὐξένησαν ὄμματα·
ὃς ὑμίν, ὦ τέκν', οὔθ' ὁρῶν οὔθ' ἱστορῶν
πατὴρ ἐφάνθην ἔνθεν αὐτὸς ἠρόθην.
καὶ σφὼ δακρύω· προσβλέπειν γὰρ οὐ σθένω·
νοούμενος τὰ λοιπὰ τοῦ πικροῦ βίου,
οἷον βιῶναι σφὼ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων χρεών.
ποίας γὰρ ἀστῶν ἥξετ' εἰς ὁμιλίας,
ποίας δ' ἑορτάς, ἔνθεν οὐ κεκλαυμέναι
πρὸς οἶκον ἴξεσθ' ἀντὶ τῆς θεωρίας;
ἀλλ' ἡνίκ' ἂν δὴ πρὸς γάμων ἥκητ' ἀκμάς,
τίς οὗτος ἔσται, τίς παραρρίψει, τέκνα,
τοιαῦτ' ὀνείδη λαμβάνων, ἃ τοῖς ἐμοῖς

But for my poor sad daughters, that dear pair
That never found my table spread apart
From them, nor missed their comrade, but must share
Always the very food their father had:
Be all your care for them. Oh! Best of all,
Let me but touch them, and so weep my full.
Grant it, my prince,
O noble spirit, grant it. But one touch,
And I could think them mine, as when I saw.
Ah! What is this?
That sound? Oh, can it be? Are these my loves,
Weeping? Has Creon pitied me, and fetched
The children of my dearest love to me?
Can it be true?

CR. 'Tis true: 'twas I so ordered it. I knew
The joy thou hadst in them. 'Tis with thee still.

OE. Be happy, and for treading this good way
A kinder fate than mine defend thy steps.
Children where are you? Come. Ah, come to me!
These arms that wait you are your brother's arms,
Their kindness bade these eyes that were so bright,
Your father's eyes, to see as now they see,
Because 'tis known, my children, ignorant
And blind, your father sowed where he was got.
For you I weep, for you. I have not strength
To see you, only thoughts of all the life
That waits you in the cruel world of men.
No gathering of Thebes, no festival
That you shall visit, but shall send you home
With tears, instead of happy holiday.
And when you come to marriage-days, ah! then
Who will be found to wed you? Who so brave
Will shoulder such reproach of shame as I

γονεῦσιν ἔσται σφῷν θ' ὁμοῦ δηλήματα;
τί γὰρ κακῶν ἄπεστι; τὸν πατέρα πατὴρ
ὑμῶν ἔπεφνε· τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἤροσεν,
ὅθεν περ αὐτὸς ἐσπάρη, κἀκ τῶν ἴσων
ἐκτήσαθ' ὑμᾶς ὥνπερ αὐτὸς ἐξέφυ.
τοιαῦτ' ὀνειδιεῖσθε· κᾆτα τίς γαμεῖ;
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδείς, ὦ τέκν', ἀλλὰ δηλαδὴ
χέρσους φθαρῆναι κἀγάμους ὑμᾶς χρεών.
ὦ παῖ Μενοικέως, ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ μόνος πατὴρ
τούτοιν λέλειψαι, νὼ γάρ, ὦ 'φυτεύσαμεν,
ὀλώλαμεν δύ' ὄντε, μή σφε περιίδῃς
πτωχὰς ἀνάνδρους ἐγγενεῖς ἀλωμένας,
μηδ' ἐξισώσῃς τάσδε τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς.
ἀλλ' οἰκτισόν σφας, ὧδε τηλικάσδ' ὁρῶν
πάντων ἐρήμους, πλὴν ὅσον τὸ σὸν μέρος.
ξύννευσον, ὦ γενναῖε, σῇ ψαύσας χερί.
σφῷν δ', ὦ τέκν', εἰ μὲν εἰχέτην ἤδη φρένας,
πόλλ' ἂν παρῄνουν· νῦν δὲ τοῦτ' εὔχεσθέ μοι,
οὗ καιρὸς ἀεὶ ζῆν, βίου δὲ λῴονος
ὑμᾶς κυρῆσαι τοῦ φυτεύσαντος πατρός.

ΚΡ. ἅλις ἴν' ἐξήκεις δακρύων· ἀλλ' ἴθι στέγης ἔσω.
ΟΙ. πειστέον, κεἰ μηδὲν ἡδύ. ΚΡ. πάντα γὰρ καιρῷ καλά.
ΟΙ. οἶσθ' ἐφ' οἷς οὖν εἶμι; ΚΡ. λέξεις, καὶ τότ' εἴσομαι κλύων.
ΟΙ. γῆς μ' ὅπως πέμψεις ἄποικον. ΚΡ. τοῦ θεοῦ μ' αἰτεῖς δόσιν.
ΟΙ. ἀλλὰ θεοῖς γ' ἔχθιστος ἥκω. ΚΡ. τοιγαροῦν τεύξει τάχα.
ΟΙ. φὴς τάδ' οὖν; ΚΡ. ἃ μὴ φρονῶ γὰρ οὐ φιλῶ λέγειν μάτην.
ΟΙ. ἄπαγέ νύν μ' ἐντεῦθεν ἤδη. ΚΡ. στεῖχέ νυν, τέκνων δ' ἀφοῦ.

Put on my parents, and must leave with you?
Is any woe left out? Your father killed
His father, took the mother of his life
And sowed the seed on her, begetting you
From the same womb whereof himself was born.
This your reproach must be. Lives there a man,
Children, to wed you? None, alas! 'Tis plain:
Unwedded and unfruitful must you die.
Son of Menoeceus, thou art left to them,
Their only father now, for we, their own,
Who gave them life, are dead. Suffer not these,
That are thy kin, beggared and husbandless
To wander, laid as low as I am laid.
Have pity on them. See how young they are,
And, save for thy good part, all desolate.
Promise me, loyal friend. Give me thy hand
In token of it. Children, out of much
I might have told you, could you understand,
Take this one counsel: be your prayer to live,
Where fortune's modest measure is, a life
That shall be better than your father's was.

CR. It is enough! Go in! Shed no more tears, but go!

OE. I would not, yet must yield.

CR. Measure in all is best.

OE. Know you the pledge I crave?

CR. Speak it, and I shall know.

OE. This:—that you banish me!

CR. That is the god's to give.

OE. The gods reject me!

CR. Then, perchance, you *shall* have banishment.

OE. You promise?

CR. Knowing not, 'tis not my wont to speak.

OE. Then take me, take me, hence!

CR. Come! Quit your children. Come!

ΟΙ. μηδαμῶς ταύτας γ' ἔλῃ μου. ΚΡ. πάντα μὴ βούλου
κρατεῖν·
καὶ γὰρ ἀκράτησας οὔ σοι τῷ βίῳ ξυνέσπετο.

ΧΟ. ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὅδε,
ὃς τὰ κλεὶν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνήρ,
οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλῳ πολιτῶν ταῖς τύχαις ἐπέβλεπεν,
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντ' ἐκείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγεινὸν παθών.

OE. No! No! You shall not.

CR. Ah! Seek not the mastery
In all. Too brief, alas! have proved your masteries.

CH. Look, ye who dwell in Thebes. This man was Oedipus.
That Mighty King, who knew the riddle's mystery,
Whom all the city envied, Fortune's favourite.
Behold, in the event, the storm of his calamities,
And, being mortal, think on that last day of death,
Which all must see, and speak of no man's happiness
Till, without sorrow, he hath passed the goal of life.

NOTES

1. The first words, *ὦ τέκνα*, characterise Oedipus as the good king: Hom. *Od.* II 47 *πατὴρ δ' ὡς ἤπιος*. The reference to Cadmus adds strength to the tenderness, reminding the Thebans of their brave origin, and appealing for courage in the name of the heroic ancestor. *Τροφή*—the 'abstract for the concrete,' as the grammarians say—is again tender in effect, and suggests that Cadmus still cares for his people. This double effect of tenderness and strength is developed throughout the paragraph. *τέκνα*, in line 6, repeats the tenderness: the proud name of Oedipus, in line 8, repeats the effect of the appeal to the name of Cadmus. So in line 11 *δείσαντες* is gentle, *στέρξαντες* stimulating.

The *Septem* opens with a similar appeal from Eteocles, in which the note of tenderness is not heard: the encouraging words 'Citizens of Cadmus' are duly stressed by repetition, 'to the city of the Cadmeians,' at the end of the paragraph. See my remarks in *Class. Quarterly*, Vol. VII April, 1913, p. 73 ff. (esp. p. 77 ff.).

The audience knows, though Oedipus does not know, that the King himself is 'nurtured of the race of Cadmus.' That tragic fact is stressed by the irony of *τεθραμμένον* in line 97.

2. Even if we reject the ancient tradition that *θοάζειν* sometimes means 'to sit' (see Jebb's very wise Appendix, p. 206), the order of the sentence stresses *ἕδρας*, and implies that the supplication is formal. The formal tone of the next line, moreover, altogether excludes the panic-stricken rout which Prof. Reinhardt invented and Prof. Murray approved. The opening scene is quiet, in order that we may appreciate Oedipus. A plague-stricken city (1) organises solemn supplication to the gods and a deputation to the King, and (2) is liable, of course, to sudden outbursts of panic. The second effect is reserved for the excitement of a choral ode. The effect of the formal supplication to Oedipus is to throw into relief his greatness and to suggest to the audience his danger. It is perilous to be honoured 'almost as a god.'

6. Another stock trait of the good King. Deioces, once so accessible and popular, when he became a tyrant (Hdt. I 97 ff.), 'established the etiquette (*κόσμον τόνδε πρῶτός ἐστι ὁ καταστησάμενος*, ch. 99), that none should go in to the King, but he should do all his business by messengers, and that the King should be seen by none.' *Cf.* Thuc. I 130 (Pausanias, when his head was turned by success, 'made himself inaccessible').

Similarly 'the good general must see the enemy for himself, not merely by the eyes of messengers' (Eur. *Heracleid.* 390).

8. His name is ὁ πᾶσι κλεινὸς Οἰδίπους, just as the name of Rhadamanthus (Plato *Laws* 624 B) was 'the Just Rhadamanthus.' The proud name is thus stressed by Oedipus to encourage the people. In the rhetorical arrangement it corresponds to 'Cadmus' in line 1. The psychological effect is: 'Remember Cadmus and be strong ... and remember that I, Oedipus, am with you.' But the words imply also the great confidence of Oedipus in himself.

11. The scholiast's 'Either from fear of chastisement or because you have suffered wrong,' implies, not that he read στέξαντες, but that he wrongly took στέρξαντες to mean 'having suffered,' practically δεινὰ παθόντες. στέξαντες is here nonsense. τίνι τρόπῳ and καθέστατε go closely together, and the participles explain τίνι τρόπῳ. The meaning is not 'With what fear or desire do you stand here?' but 'In what mood are you come—fear or good courage?' The effect of δείσαντες ἢ στέρξαντες is recalled at line 89 by the similar pair, οὔτε θρασὺς οὔτ' οὖν προδείσας. The editors try to force στέρξαντες to mean 'desiring.' Jebb refers to *O.C.* 1093. But analysis of that passage will show that the context and the order of the words—to say nothing of the fact that the tone is lyrical and excited—destroy the force of the alleged parallel. We have there, first, a prayer to Zeus and Athene, Ζεῦ...πόροις: then, when we hear καὶ τὸν ἀγρευτὰν Ἀπόλλω...στέργω the word στέργω means simply 'I pay loving homage to...' like στέργω δ' ὄμματα Πειθοῦς in Aesch. *Eum.* 970: finally, by a sudden shift of grammar and emotion, only possible because we have already had the prayer to Zeus, an infinitive is added. When we hear the infinitive, it is as if στέργω had meant 'I entreat'—but that does not imply that Sophocles could have written, *e.g.* μολεῖν σε στέργω in the sense of 'I entreat thee to come.'

The natural interpretation of στέρξαντες, then, is here 'having steeled yourselves to endure.' The argument that 'the question of Oedipus' is, on that interpretation, 'unnecessary' because 'Oedipus does not suppose that they are resigned' or because 'those who are resigned have no ground for supplication,' is sufficiently answered by Isocrates πρὸς Δημόνικον 8 b, στέργε μὲν τὰ παρόντα, ζήτει δὲ τὰ βέλτιστα. Of course Oedipus knows they are miserably afraid: he tries to make them courageous by asking them whether they have come in a mood 'of fear or of brave endurance?' An actor will pause a little before the word στέρξαντες. For the importance of this appeal see Introduction, pp. xx, lxxii: the reminiscence in *O.C.* 7 strengthens the argument from language and from common-sense.

16. An ingenious theory which makes two classes of suppliants, old

men, and youths between the ages of fourteen and eighteen ἥβοι, explains 'not yet able to fly far' as an allusion to the fact that such youths are not yet full citizens. I think however that the contrast is between the weight of years and the weakness of childhood. The deputation is composed of children, youths and old men.

'Your altars': the phrase is, of course, immediately understood as equivalent to 'the altars that stand before your house'; the image and altar of Apollo before the palace doors have a special significance for our tragedy. But the words are chosen by the poet as a hint for the audience of the situation which is more plainly stated at line 31. Oedipus is so great that he is approached almost as a god.

18. The priest of Zeus is not selected by the poet without a tragic design. His words ἀλλ' ὦ κρατύνων are later addressed by the chorus to the one true King of sure title and eternal power. See 903 note. Great use is made in tragedy, not least in our play, of the fact that earthly Kings derive authority from Zeus and of the contrast which that fact suggests. I will mention here, as a noble example, the chorus of Aesch. *Ag.* 39 ff.: from διθρόνου Διόθεν...τιμῆς ἐχυρόν (42), we pass to Ἀπόλλων ἢ Πὰν ἢ Ζεύς (55), thence to the greater Zeus—ξένιος Ζεύς (61), and so, at last, after hearing of the sign of the eagles οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νεῶν κ.τ.λ. (113), we come to the great appeal of line 160 Ζεὺς ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν....

20. The shrines which are chosen for mention are not chosen at random. Our imagination is presently to be stirred by the appeals of the chorus (159 ff.), to Artemis, 'throned in the market-place,' to Pallas Athene, and to Apollo, who gives the oracle at the Ismenian altar. Pallas was worshipped at Thebes, but, as Jebb remarks, the effect of mentioning her 'two shrines' is poignant for Athenian ears. In the choral ode she reappears as daughter of Zeus: but as the ode proceeds she yields place to Zeus himself. Artemis is appropriate mainly as sister of Apollo. Finally, in the ode, to crown the splendour, Dionysus, who is not yet, like the others, in our thoughts, is suddenly added.

22. 'For the city...': the beauty of the composition depends partly on the fact that the form of the King's address is recalled. He began with Cadmus, then spoke of the city's prayer and lamentation, then ended his first period with the appeal of his own great name. The priest answers in the reverse order: Oedipus comes first. 'King Master of my country...': the middle term is again the city: then the reference to Cadmus is taken up with the words 'the house of Cadmus is being emptied and Hades made rich...with tears.'

23–24. The metaphor which treats a city as a ship is familiar to us from Alcaeus and Horace: but Sophocles, by using it here, develops in

a characteristic way his allusion to the *Septem* of Aeschylus, in which this image is a recurrent *motif*. See note on line 1.

25. The blight on (1) crops, (2) births of cattle and women is normal (Hdt. III 65, VI 139). The lyrical formula at line 171 exactly corresponds. Thucydides alludes to the traditional combination of blight and pestilence in his phrase (II 54) 'they were grievously afflicted—men in the city dying, the land outside the city suffering devastation' (*sc.* at the hand of the enemy, not by supernatural blight). There is nothing in the description of blight or pestilence which can be used as a good argument for the date of the play. Similar expressions to those of Sophocles are used indeed by Thucydides, but it would have been strange if Thucydides had avoided, *e.g.*, such obvious words as ἐγκαταστῆψαι (II 47 3), οὔτε γὰρ ἰατροὶ ἤρκουν (II 47 4, *cf. O.T.* line 12) or the references to supplications and to oracles. If we knew that our play was subsequent to the famous plague, we should recall with interest the fact that Delphi was supposed to have had a share in producing the Athenian calamity (II 54). But we do not know. The analogy, like the analogy which has been noticed between Oedipus and Pericles, is significant of the general Athenian point of view. More we cannot assert.

27. The burning heat gives its name to fever (πυρετός) in Greek, and besides, pestilence spreads and rages like a fire. There is nothing difficult, therefore, in the expression 'Fire-bringing God' for Pestilence. But the vivid phrase has great value for the sequel. See notes on 166, 186, 200, 470. Because of its striking development the phrase is important enough to be recalled in the *Oedipus at Colonus*. There (lines 55 ff.) every epithet links Colonus with the 'Kindly Goddesses' who are to give Oedipus rest. That is why Poseidon is called σεμνός, since the goddesses are the σεμναί. Similarly Prometheus, an ancient earth power like the Eumenides, is called Τιτάν. He is also called ὁ πυρφόρος θεός, and so the place of the devastating god of fiery plague and vengeance has been taken by another god of fire—but of kindly civilising fire. Eur. *Phoen.* 687 alludes to the treatment which this theme receives in the choruses of our play.

31–45. These lines form the second paragraph of the speech. The proverbial couplet at the end marks a pause. The form is carefully balanced, falling into three divisions:—first, 'We approach you, not as a god, but as the first of men, both in ordinary human chances and in matters in which the gods specially intervene'; then, 'Because you are said and thought to have saved us without any human aid, but by your own wit and the help of the gods'; thirdly, 'As then, so now, since you are greatest in the eyes of all men, we ask you to help us, by any means you can find, by aid of god or man.' Then the whole is rounded off by the proverb 'Old hands are best.'

The mechanical symmetry which some scholars have sought to establish by making all paragraphs contain the same number of lines does not often exist. But it remains true that these three divisions, consisting of four, five, and four lines respectively, are very carefully arranged.

31. Aristotle, in discussing Kingship (*Pol.* Γ′ 13 13 1284 a), makes a remark which, we shall find, is worth remembering: 'If any person or persons be so far above everyone else in excellence...that the excellence and political ability of all the rest put together is not comparable to the excellence of such persons...we must not class such persons as part of a state. It will be an injustice to give them the same treatment as ordinary men...A man like this should be regarded as really a god among men.' The point is that the idea of such a man existing is too remote to be worth considering by the statesman.

The statement of the priest is actually pious and cautious but, for the audience, such words crown the greatness of Oedipus and point out his danger. To be honoured almost as a god is the lot of the happiest Kings: the temptation of happy Kings is to consider themselves more than mortal, and to accept honours properly reserved for the gods. That is the sin of Agamemnon, when he walks on the purple tapestries. It is the sin against which Pindar continually warns his patrons. We shall see how Sophocles has applied the familiar idea.

33–34. The use of *συμφοραῖς* and *συναλλαγαῖς* illustrates a characteristic of the language of Sophocles very important but not generally appreciated. *συμφορά*, though it properly means 'an event,' is more often used for a 'disastrous event'; and *συναλλαγή*, though its form makes it quite easy to use it in the sense of 'traffic' 'intercourse,' also often means in Sophocles a 'visitation' of evil. Its common prose meaning 'reconciliation' is not here thought of. The old priest means 'In the common affairs of life and in those more important events in which the hand of the gods is more clearly seen.' But, for the audience, who know the sequel, there is a hint in the words that 'Oedipus is first in disasters and in divinely wrought calamities.' If you examine carefully all the so-called *abusiones* of Sophocles (see *e.g.* Kugler *de Soph. quae vocantur abusionibus*) you will find that nearly always the normal sense is felt by the audience at work beneath the abnormal meaning which the context alone makes necessary. The result is to add to the sense that the speakers 'know not what they say':—in other words, the tragic irony is heightened by what at first sight seems to be nothing but a poet's rather bold vocabulary.

38. 'With the aid of a god': Bruhn remarks that Oedipus, proud of his intelligence, does not agree. I think that at the outset of the play there is nothing to justify this suggestion. Of course, at 396 Oedipus in

his excitement has forgotten to acknowledge the divine assistance: but that is a sign of his growing self-confidence. At the outset he would piously agree.

40. The form of the phrase heightens the effect already attained, since *κράτιστον* recalls the priest's *ἀλλ' ὦ κρατύνων* (14) and *πᾶσι* recalls the proud name of Oedipus *ὁ πᾶσι κλεινός* (8).

43. Jebb is unquestionably right in his interpretation of *φήμη* as 'any message, any rumour or speech casually heard, which might be interpreted as a hint from the gods.' The formula which describes that sort of thing is to say that a person has spoken *σὺν θεῷ* (Hdt. III 153), *i.e.*, with a greater truth than he knows. The belief that people constantly do this naturally involves the further belief that a clever person can draw inferences from the 'chance' utterances which really come from the gods. Of course such notions add greatly to the effect of tragic irony. There is no sort of excuse for the suggestion that Oedipus is regarded as having a miraculous and private intercourse with the gods. The advocates of the theory that Oedipus has characteristics derived from the primitive 'medicine king' do not strengthen their case by misinterpreting perfectly familiar words like *φήμη*. Whatever the origin of the legend, Oedipus is to Sophocles simply a great and extraordinarily quick-witted person, likely to catch more quickly than others at any hint or clue, whether human or divine. The tragedy depends upon the fact that this quickness actually blinds him.

44–45. In spite of Jebb's excellent note and Appendix (p. 207) editors still try to make this couplet mean 'Two heads are better than one,' as if, by an etymological juggle, Sophocles, without help from the context, can make so common a word as *ξυμφορὰς* mean 'the bringing together for comparison' of opinions. Now Sophocles does not, I venture to say, at any rate in this play, perform meaningless verbal gymnastics. See my remark on *abusio* above (line 33). The sense, also, is quite unsuitable. We want a proverbial phrase, quite familiar, which shall sum up the point, not of one little clause, but of the whole symmetrical paragraph. And this is exactly what Sophocles has given. The whole paragraph means: 'We come to you because you saved us before: we hope you will save us again.' Now Greek stresses the first word of the sentence: the proverb means: 'It is in the case of men of experience, above all others, that I find both counsel and event live!' Similarly Herodotus III 81 *ἀρίστων ἀνδρῶν οἰκὸς ἄριστα βουλεύματα γίνεσθαι*, means 'It is the best men whose counsels are likely to be the best.' The difficulty of the genitive would not have been felt if the scholars had remembered the extraordinary popularity of the combination 'word and deed' 'counsel and act.' It is because this is so familiar that Sophocles can play with

his phrase, and say 'what happens in regard to what they plan, as well as (καὶ) what they plan.' That gives him the chance of making the innocent phrase seem somehow to the audience disquieting. He delays τῶν βουλευμάτων in order that we may feel τὰς ξυμφορὰς ζώσας... with its sinister suggestion of 'disasters alive.' (See line 33.) We feel it only half-consciously, but by such slight touches, hardly realised by his audience, Sophocles prepares the mind for the full emotional value of such lines as *e.g.* 833, 1527.

The proverb that the trial of experience is the only sure test of a man is very popular in Greek. See Pindar *Ol.* IV 16, VIII 61, Eur. *fr.* 809 (persons who have 'never given the proof,' whose 'wisdom is not so much in reality as in seeming'), Theogn. 571. Oedipus, having once passed the test will not fail now 'in counsel and in the acts that belong to that counsel.' That is what the priest means. The sentiment is based on proverbs like πεῖρα μαθήσιος ἀρχά, αὐτόματον οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἀπὸ πείρης πάντα ἀνθρώποισι φιλέει γίνεσθαι (Hdt. VII 9), ἃ δὲ μελέτα φύσιος ἀγαθᾶς πλέονα δωρεῖται (Epicharm. Diels, 33 p. 95). But the proverb has another application which the sequel will in most sinister fashion develop:—It is the exercise of authority that shows the man, see *e.g.* Diog. L. I § 77, the opinion of Pittacus. You can never be sure *till the test comes* who is wise, fortunate, moderate in the use of power. See line 613 note.

46–57. This is the final paragraph of the great appeal. The first paragraph suggested the greatness of Oedipus in contrast with the weakness of the suppliants, and described the plight of the city: the second asserted that the greatness which justifies the appeal for help is vouched for by past service: the third bids Oedipus to be mindful of his honour and to save the city for the future. Thus the first paragraph describes the present, the second appeals to the past, the third looks to the future. In line 46 Oedipus has the title 'Best of Men,' higher than the titles of line 14 and line 40. Then the word ὀρθῶσαι, used in line 39 to describe the past service, recurs in a strengthened form, ἀνόρθωσον: the repetition of this word at line 51 marks the end of a first subdivision of the final appeal: that subdivision simply repeats the thought of the second main paragraph, with the addition of the warning and appeal for the future. This effect is summed up in the next couplet 52–53. Then, in the last four lines, the warning is repeated in the most significant phrases of all, and made more moving by a subtle reminiscence of the plight of the city as described in lines 22–30. That is the effect of κενῆς, and of the reference to the ship. Finally the last proverbial couplet combines with quiet dignity the warning and the pathos.

The problem for Sophocles was to make his priest present a sufficiently moving picture of the city's suffering and need, without making

us feel more concern for the fate of the city than for the fate of Oedipus. My remarks on the form of the speech are intended to show by what method Sophocles has, as I think he has, succeeded. It is not only formal beauty but also dramatic effect that is sacrificed if we begin our performance with an excited crowd.

46. Bruhn well observes that the word *ὀρθοῦν* of which so much use is made here, is familiar to the audience as part of a well known formula of prayer to Athene for the city's safety. The effect is to heighten our sense of the fact that Oedipus is honoured almost as a god.

47. All editors perceive the ambiguity and tragic power of *εὐλαβήθητι*. For the priest it means 'Have a care for the maintenance of your past reputation as a benefactor.' For us it suggests, 'Walk carefully, with that moderation which great men most need.' *ἀσφάλεια* depends on *εὐλάβεια*.

54. Here the editors miss the point. Deluded by the fact that sometimes in Greek a synonym is substituted for variety where English or German would repeat a word—just as sometimes Greek repeats where we should substitute—commentators eagerly assure us that although '*κρατεῖν τινός* merely means to hold in one's power and *ἄρχειν* implies a constitutional rule,' yet 'the poet intends no stress on a verbal contrast: it is as if he had written *εἴπερ ἄρξεις ὥσπερ ἄρχεις*.' Line 14 and line 40 suggest that the poet has some reason for dwelling on the theme of 'mere power.' To the priest, it is true, the words mean simply 'If you intend to prove in the future an excellent governor as you are a powerful King to-day.' But the associations of the word *κρατεῖν* suggest, very lightly but quite certainly, the danger of the despotic frame of mind: subconsciously, perhaps, but certainly, we are affected by the word. We are reminded of a theme which is presently to be sounded with clear insistence, and is to become one of the chief *motifs* of the play.

58–77. *παῖδες* recalls the tenderness of line 1. The ambiguity of lines 61–64 is different in effect from the unconscious warning of the priest. The priest made us tremble for the moral health of the King: this speech makes us pity the unconscious victim, and is carefully framed to make us realise that, although his position is one of great moral danger, he is, at heart, not arrogant, but a good King, father of his people.

After 64, 67, 72, 75, there is a slight pause. After the perfect sympathy and sorrow of the first paragraph, a stronger note is heard in lines 65 ff., rising to a vigorous confidence in 68. At 73 there is some anxiety, and at the slow repetition of the thought in 75 a certain irritation. It is the first note of the coming conflict with Creon. Finally the last couplet is vigorous and confident.

65. It is true, as Jebb says, that the modal dative *ὕπνῳ* raises and

invigorates the metaphor: but the metaphor is not to be despised because it is trite. Familiar it is, but that is why it is so effective. It is Kings who do not, if they are good Kings, sleep. Homer himself assumes it. The dream which appears to Agamemnon, though a false dream, tells the truth when it says: 'A man that is a counsellor to whom the people is entrusted, one that hath so many claims upon his thought, ought not to sleep the long night through!' (*Il.* II 23 f.), and although the proverb has become a metaphor in *Il.* IV 223, where the Trojans advance and 'then you would not have seen Agamemnon sleeping,' the actual scene which serves as pattern for the anxiety of the good king is also to be found in Homer, *Il.* X 3–10. There you will find the ancestor of the weeping as well as of the sleeplessness of Oedipus. The theme was used by Aeschylus for Eteocles in *Sept.* 3, and is therefore peculiarly effective here. A good King wakes for the benefit of his people, but a bad King cannot sleep because he is afraid. Contrast the picture of the changed Oedipus at lines 620, 914.

The common proverb that night is the time for thought (Epicharmus, Diels, 27 p. 94 *αἴ τί κα ζατῇς σοφόν, τᾶς νυκτὸς ἐνθυμητέον* and 28 p. 94 *πάντα τὰ σπουδαῖα νυκτὸς μᾶλλον ἐξευρίσκεται*) is later combined with the mystical doctrine that the soul wakes when the body sleeps.

LA *ὕπνῳ γ' εὕδοντά μ'*: Γ *ὕπνων*. Badham's *ἐνδόντα* is unnecessary, and *ὕπνῳ* does, as Jebb says, add vigour to the notion of *εὕδοντα*. But *γέ* seems out of place: it should stress *ὕπνῳ* and make the effect something like:—'It is not sleep that causes the lethargy from which you rouse me!' Γ preserves here a trace of the true reading *ὕπνῳ μ' εὕδοντά γ'*.

69. Sophocles adapts with consummate skill the commonplace, often so crudely used, of 'word and deed,' to the purpose of expressing the intense vitality of Oedipus. With him to think is to act. He is like the Cyrus of Herodotus I 79:—'When this seemed good to him, he proceeded with all speed to put it into action.' We recognise an Athenian trait. Thuc. I 70, the Athenians are *ἐπινοῆσαι ὀξεῖς καὶ ἐπιτελέσαι ἔργῳ ὅ ἂν γνῶσιν*. The character of Oedipus is revealed by the sudden energy of *ἔπραξα* here, then by the slight stress thrown by the arrangement of the words on *δρῶν* in line 72, and finally by the repetition of *δρῶν* in line 77. Similarly, his vigour is suggested by the substitution of the direct *τί* for the indirect *ὅ τι* in 72, and by the second direct *τί* in 74.

The elaborate treatment of the dignity of Creon is intended to encourage the suppliants.

71–72. Prof. Murray translates 'what bitter task,' and treats the passage, accordingly, as evidence for his theory that Oedipus expects to be told that he must die for his people. There is, I venture to think, no

evidence that Sophocles was acquainted with the theory of the Golden Bough. He knew, of course, that certain legendary kings gave themselves or their relatives as human sacrifices for the state. That does not justify us in supposing that he thought of such persons as 'medicine kings'—whether or not the modern theory, that they were originally such, be true. Nothing points to a general Greek assumption that the normal thing for a King to expect, if his country was in danger, was an invitation to self-slaughter. The sacrifice, then as now, was generally demanded from less exalted persons. So far as the phrase 'by word or deed' is concerned, we have fortunately two exact parallels, one of which cannot possibly be distorted for purpose of anthropological inexactitude. The father of Io was also a King. Is it seriously suggested that he felt this personal anxiety when he sent messages to Delphi to learn 'by what word or deed he ought to satisfy the gods' (Aesch. *P. V.* 659)? Anyhow, when Orestes and Electra ask 'by what word or deed' they can stir up the spirit of Agamemnon to help them against the usurpers, they clearly have no thought of self-immolation. The formula, common in all Greek, means 'How?,' and is specially used of ritual.

72. It is surprising that Jebb should write:—'*ῥυσοίμην* is grammatically possible but less fitting...because *ῥυσοίμην* implies that Oedipus is confident of a successful result.' Of course he is. That is what makes Linwood's *ῥυσοίμην* attractive. But in view of the strong MSS evidence I have kept *ῥυσαίμην*, with Jebb.

73–75. The lateness of Creon and the slight irritation of the anxious King give the first hint, as Patin pointed out, of the suspicion and quarrel which are to come. At this point, of course, there is no suspicion: only, the irritation hints at an attitude of mind in which the suspicion may arise. The immediate effect is to give an opportunity for the repetition of the sudden vigour which emerged in line 69.

76. The word *κακός* is to play an important part in the relations of Oedipus, Teiresias and Creon. He calls them *κακός*, and in the end confesses that the word applies to himself. See line 1421.

78–79. Creon is advancing into the orchestra by the passage between the palace and the left hand side of the auditorium. He is first seen by some of the youths, who indicate his approach by signs to the Priest of Zeus. At 79 he is seen by all the spectators, but has still some distance to walk before he is able from the orchestra to converse with Oedipus who stands on the palace steps.

The priest's words mean more than 'Your words are good, and Creon is coming.' *εἰς καλὸν* applies to both clauses: and the sense is: 'Your words are *καίρια*' because they are both hopeful and modest, 'and similarly Creon's coming just when you have spoken so wisely is of good

omen.' The speech of Oedipus ended with a pious vow to do whatever the god commands. It is to this that the priest directly refers: but the whole speech of Oedipus was, indeed, inspired by the right-minded moderation which promises good.

80. Oedipus himself has won the title 'Saviour' because with 'good omen he brought Fortune' to Thebes. The theme becomes of great importance later in the play—when Oedipus, forgetting his mortality, trusts overmuch to Luck (1080). The couplet plays on a note which is to become tragic: for the moment it illustrates only the piety of the King.

83. Those who return from Delphi with good news are crowned with Apollo's laurel. Eur. *Hip.* 806 reminds us that it was not the custom for those who received a bad answer to wear it. In this case as Creon's words imply, the oracle is partly good, partly bad. The laurel wreath is worn in the hope that the good will prevail over the evil, *τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω* (Aesch. *Ag.* 121), and because by saying that the message is good you help the good to prevail. See note on line 87.

84. The character of Oedipus is felt in the strong 'We shall soon know,' with which he brushes aside the vague 'conjecture' of the priest. The effect depends partly on the fact that the priest's conjecture is in fact not quite justified, as Creon now proceeds to inform us.

87. See the interpretation of a bad dream in Aesch. *Persae.* It is a good thing that the first 'judges' of the dream are kindly and give it a good meaning (226): the queen is to pray for the 'turning away' of the bad element, the realisation of the good (217 f.): line 225 expresses just the notion here expressed by Creon: if the issue be on the whole good, it may be called wholly good. The parallel is completed by the opening words of the 'interpreters': 'We do not wish to terrify you overmuch, nor yet to make you too confident.' So here Creon says the message is good, just as he wears the laurel, in order to make it turn out well. Really it is ambiguous, promising relief, yet reviving old troubles and setting a task which seems very difficult. The formula of prayer that the evil be turned into good is conventional, necessary in such cases. In Aesch. *Ag.* 146, as Walter Headlam once remarked, the mysterious *στρουθῶν* may quite possibly be a corruption for *ἀνορθοῦν*, the prayer to Artemis being 'Accomplish what is good in these signs, and set right what is evil.' However this may be, the formula here, as in the *Ag.*, 'partly good, partly bad,' is traditional. It is subtly modified by Sophocles for his dramatic purpose. Creon means simply 'even that part of the message that is bad, will be for the best if it ends in good.' But the literal meaning of *ἐξιόντα*, 'coming out,' is felt beneath the sense which the context gives to the word—here used for *ἀποβαίνοντα* or the

like. [Mr A. C. Pearson in *C.Q.* vol. XIII 1919 p. 120, gives good reason for accepting ἐξιόντα from Suidas and Zonaras in place of the MSS reading ἐξελθόντα.] The audience are to be half-unconsciously reminded of the tragic fact that the evil is to 'come out' to the light, κατ' ὀρθόν, not merely 'in a good issue' but 'in accordance with the oracles of Apollo.' At the moment of course, we feel no more than a vague hint: as the play develops the words ἐξελθεῖν and ὀρθός acquire a tragic value. See lines 506, 1084, 1182, 1221. The full dramatic value of the language here used can, however, only be appreciated if we remember also the familiarity of the ideas expressed, for instance, by the letter of the pious Amasis to the too prosperous Polycrates (Hdt. III 40, 43, 44):—'I also wish, in my own life, to be fortunate in part of the matters for which I care, in part to fail, and thus to live throughout my life in changing good and ill, rather than to be fortunate in all things. For I know of none among all whose story I have heard that ended not at last in evil and in utter ruin, if he was fortunate in every thing.' The divine envy, however, of which Amasis also speaks, is not relevant to the moral of our play.

89–90. In all that concerns the future a man, as man, ought to be neither too hopeful nor too much afraid. Sophocles plays already on the theme of modest measure. Oedipus is at present rightly-minded. Soon he will be unduly fearful, then unduly optimistic. Again there is no hint of Mr Murray's fear that he may be called upon to die for his people, but only the pious use of a cautious formula.

94. The point again is simply that Oedipus is a good sort of democratic king. A man's life is his most precious possession, and it is quite natural for a king who wants to say 'Let them hear: for it is their grief that matters to me more than anything else,' to put his point as strongly as possible by saying—'I care for their grief more than for my own life.' See Hom. *Il.* IX 401, Hesiod *Op.* 686, Eur. *Orest.* 644, *Andr.* 418.

But there is, as usual, tragic irony, which indeed depends partly on the fact that Oedipus—*pace* Professor Murray—has no idea that the answer will affect himself and all that he holds most dear.

95. The optative with ἄν is rendered by Jebb, 'I will speak by your leave....' But although this is often the effect of the tentative optative, the context here suggests not 'I will, if I may,' but 'I will, if I must.' Creon would prefer to speak in private.

97. The words are chosen with veiled reference to the fact that it is the Theban birth of Oedipus that is the cause of his calamity: *cf.* 452 ff. and notice in that connection the use of ξυμφορᾶς in 99.

101. τόδε does not merely, by a Sophoclean 'boldness' of idiom, mean 'this blood,' implied by the phrase φόνῳ φόνον..., but seems to

spring straight from the thought of the speaker: 'Tis this, 'tis blood.' So *αὕτη* in 442.

103. Oedipus need not be told this! Creon, realising the difficulty of finding the murderers, and also embarrassed at having to speak before the crowd, is slow in coming to the point.

105. Oedipus is now falling into the tone of a judge who examines carefully even the most obvious statement to see whether it is evidence. So, after a rather impatient 'I know that well,' he corrects himself. Hearsay is not knowledge. The remark shows the character of the man. The irony is not so cheap as it may at first sight appear to those who do not remember how the Greeks love to dwell on the proverb 'Ears are less trustworthy than eyes' (Hdt. 1 8).

107. *τινὰς* is an afterthought, an expression of Creon's sense of the difficulty of the task. The plural is vaguely used and so felt by the audience. Accounts of the play which begin by explaining the point about 'robber' and 'robbers,' tend to obscure the skill of the gradual development of this theme by Sophocles.

109. If, with some editors, we put the note of interrogation at *εὑρεθήσεται*, we spoil the stress. If line 109 is a complete sentence, the emphasis must fall on the unimportant *ἴχνος* not on the adjectives—Greek could not in that case stress *δυστέκμαρτον*: but if *ἴχνος* is explanatory of *τόδε* the stress falls naturally in the right places on *παλαιᾶς* and on *δυστέκμαρτον*. For the use of *τόδε* with the explanatory *ἴχνος*, *cf.* 101, 442.

110. Creon repeats the statement of 97–8, and answers the proverbial tone of 109 (which means 'this—which is the trace of an ancient crime and therefore hard to discover') with a very sententious: 'You can only find a thing by trying to look for it.' This also is proverbial; see Xenophanes (Diels, 18 p. 49) *οὔτοι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖσ' ὑπέδειξαν, ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον*. For the form of the sentence *cf.* Plato *Rep.* VIII. 551 A *ἀσκεῖται δὴ τὸ ἀεὶ τιμώμενον, ἀμελεῖται δὲ τὸ ἀτιμαζόμενον*. By the choice of the words *ἁλωτὸν* 'caught' and *ἐκφεύγει* 'escapes,' Sophocles has added to the sententiousness a subtle hint of the tragedy. Oedipus, by persisting in the search, is in fact to discover something terrible and unsought. The moral, of course, is not that it is wrong for him to persist. Simply the result is tragic. Plutarch has an interesting passage (*Mor.* 97 E) in which, with the fate of Oedipus in his mind, he denies that 'Luck governs all' (see *O.T.* 977, 1080): 'If all that belongs to the sphere of good counsel (*εὐβουλία*) simply depends on Luck,' we may as well say that justice, temperance, thieving, lust, etc., are all matters of luck: and 'Sophocles talked nonsense when he said *πᾶν τὸ ζητούμενον*, etc.' Plutarch perceived, I think, the very subtle

and tragic relation between 100–111 and the impiety of 977 and 1080.

112–113. The form of the question sounds to an Athenian ear quite natural and unforced. Oedipus speaks as King and Judge. According to Aristotle, *Pol.* Γ′ 14 13 p. 1215 b, 'Kings in the time of the ancients exercised their sway over matters concerning (1) the city, (2) the country districts round the city, (3) the districts beyond the borders of their territory.' Newman refers also to Plato *Phaedrus* 230 c.

114. According to one form of the legend (see Eur. *Phoen.* 36), Laïus had doubts about the death of his son, and went to Delphi to ask the god as to his fate. Sophocles very delicately adapts this story, by sending Laïus to Delphi without informing us of his purpose. I cannot, with Robert, *Oidipus* p. 96, believe that ὡς ἔφασκεν implies that Creon suspected Laïus' purpose and knew of the exposure of the child. Creon speaks as a careful witness, distinguishing what is evidence from what is not. He speaks only what he knows. For the moral development of that fact see lines 569, 1520.

117. 'From whom one might have learnt, and used the information.' The sudden shift of construction is vivid, and renews the impression of the energy of Oedipus: see *e.g.* 69, 72, 77. Bruhn accepts from Ed. Schwartz κατῆλθεν οὗ. L has κατεῖδ' ἐν (*ἐν in rasura*) ὅτου, and other MSS κατεῖδ' ὅτου, which I, after Jebb and others, accept. It is like Sophocles to make the King's speech outrun logic in order to express the rapidity of his thought: 'Was there no messenger from him—no fellow-traveller with him—no eyewitness of the calamity...?' Similarly ὅτου, with its slight note of uncertainty, is characteristic.

120. Bruhn rightly calls attention to the tragic effect of these words, and points to the sequel in 1182, where the 'one' thing has produced 'the many,' and τὰ πάντα comes out clear.

122. At 107 the audience hardly noticed the plural. Here it is forced on their attention, and they begin to see that it will be important in misleading Oedipus. The terror of the servant who escaped is alleged by the scholiast to have made him see more than was really to be seen. But exaggeration also helped him to escape the suspicion of cowardice.

124. The singular is generic, and does not imply that Oedipus takes the view that it must have been a single robber. It is used as, for instance, we use 'The Turk.' But the fact that Oedipus can thus casually use the singular has its dramatic value: it serves to help us to realise that he has no suspicion of the importance of the statement that the crime was committed by a company of men. The effect of Creon's words on his mind is different, more subtle—as his mind is subtle—and misleading. The mention of the strength of the alleged company of

bandits suggests to him that 'of course it is a bold thing for any highwayman to undertake an attack upon a King.' He assumes at present, quite naturally, that Laïus travelled as a King (751). Therefore the remark that a strong band of highwaymen was concerned, though it does not impress him as important evidence, suggests to him the thought: 'What could have induced mere highwaymen to attack a King's bodyguard?'

The suspicion which thus arises is quite natural, and, although it is so acute that editors have thought it ridiculously extravagant, it is, for a suspicion, well-founded. The King has heard two statements: the guilty person is to be found in Thebes: the murderers were highwaymen, and the crime was committed somewhere on the road from Thebes to Delphi. Then the mention of the numbers of the highwaymen has suggested the thought 'What could induce highwaymen to undertake so risky an enterprise?' That they were paid for their trouble is a natural suggestion—and 'by some party in Thebes' is the natural corollary. The words come from the lips of the King as the thoughts pass through his mind.

127. Bruhn thinks the word *ἀρωγός* 'helper' suspicious, but a murdered man himself desires vengeance and tries to take it: the living only help him. That notion explains *ἐπίκουρος* in 496, where it is a mistake to talk of the word being 'used in the sense of avenger': it means 'helper in the matter of....'

128–129. The tone is indignant. The suspicion that Theban politics had a share in the crime is confirmed. The Theban authorities themselves did not follow up the clue! Well, Creon was himself in authority. We see that the King has not yet reached the natural inference: but we feel that the road is open for the final mistake. The break between *ἐμποδὼν* and *εἶργε*, the slight redundance, and the use of *ἐξειδέναι* in strong contrast to Creon's *δοκοῦντα* (*cf.* 84, 105) are all indignant in effect. For the audience the lines reveal, not only this half-conscious accumulation of suspicion, but also the somewhat excessive emotion of Oedipus about Kingship. *τυραννίδος* means here simply 'a royal throne,' but the first hint is given of the development which is to make Oedipus himself behave as a 'tyrant,' because he thinks that Kingship is, as the Greeks say, 'something.'

130. The tone is one of quiet remonstrance. The proverb says that one should consider the immediate and pressing needs, not run after vague and secondary matters. Jebb well refers to Pindar *Isthm.* VIII 12. Sophocles *fr.* 671 *μισῶ μὲν ὅστις τἀφανῆ περισκοπεῖ...* illustrates the proverb: so does Thales falling into the well: *cf. τὰ κατ' αἰθέρα λεύσσων τοὺν ποσὶν οὐκ ἐδάην πῆμα κυλινδόμενον* (Antipater Sidon. Anth. Pal. 7 172, quoted by Nauck). Add Eur. *Rhesus* 482 *μή νυν τὰ πόρρω τἀγγύθεν*

μεθεὶς σκόπει. Thus Creon justifies himself by the use of a familiar maxim: but the formula has tragic value, since it is used at the very moment when Oedipus is falling under the influence of a groundless, vague suspicion, *ἀφανὴς* (657), which will blind him for a time to the real danger that lies close at hand. The tone of Creon's defence should make us feel that the visitation of the Sphinx was terrible. I believe that there should be a moment of strained silence before Oedipus, bracing himself to energy and dispelling by his confidence the gloom of the whole assembly, speaks line 132.

132. *αὐτά*: not exactly *τἀφανῆ* (Jebb), rather 'the whole matter.' The vague plural is used by Sophocles with great effect for 'all that is in your mind.' See notes on lines 317, 902.

αὖθις: not 'as he had done in the case of the Sphinx's riddle' (Jebb), but closely with *ἐξ ὑπαρχῆς* 'taking up the enquiry again right from the beginning—where you left it.'

133–136. After the splendid promise of 132 there is again a pause. Then follow four lines which make a period beginning with Phoebus and ending with 'the God.' Then 137–141 make yet another period—this time four lines followed by an impressive single line which repeats, with a noble rhythm, the point of the four, and emphasises for the audience their tragic irony. The second period is connected with the first by the natural resumption of the idea of *πρό* in *ὑπέρ*....

133. *ἐπαξίως*, as Jebb says, is slightly stronger than *ἀξίως*. Bruhn is wrong in classifying this as an example of the use of two words in precisely the same sense 'for variety.' The dramatic value of the difference is considerable, since we already detect—what Oedipus does not yet realise—the growing suspicion against Creon. The tone is one of reverent acknowledgment to the god, of quiet courtesy—as by an afterthought—to Creon.

140. *τοιαύτῃ χειρὶ* 'with the like hand,' not quite the same as *τῇ αὐτῇ χειρί*. The King's mind still dwells on the thought that the guilty person is to be sought in Thebes. If so, the promoter of the murder of Laïus may well 'use a similar—robber—hand' to strike at Oedipus. *τιμωρεῖν* means, in the mouth of Oedipus, simply 'to hurt'—but here, again, the normal meaning 'to take vengeance on' 'to punish' is felt by the audience, and adds to the tragic effect.

141. *προσαρκῶν* admirably recalls the promise of lines 11–12. The *πᾶν* of that promise is combined in line 145 with the vigorous *δράσοντος*.

142–146. The reminiscence of the opening speeches, suggested by *προσαρκῶν*, is developed by some very beautiful and delicate touches. The address to the suppliants as 'children' has now a new tone of affectionate cheerfulness, and the word *παῖδες* is caught up by the priest

in line 147. The phrase 'people of Cadmus' in 144 again recalls line 1. Finally as this speech began with *φανῶ*—I will bring all to light—so it ends 'with the god's aid we shall be manifested (*φανούμεθα*) as either lucky—or fallen indeed.' The last word recalls the priest's appeal (50) and is for us, of course, tragic.

As we have already noticed, Creon's message from Delphi is of doubtful import. It is a hard task to find the murderers: failure means that Thebes must continue to suffer. That is the thought of Oedipus: and 'lucky' is a suitable word. But see 52, 80, and 88. We are already beginning to feel the tragic significance of this theme of 'luck.' It is not too soon for us to remind the reader that, according to Greek notions, a man must not be called 'happy,' but only 'lucky,' until he has finished his life in prosperity. You must not trust your luck, nor think it certain to last.

143. The symbols of the prayer are removed from the altars when the prayer has been granted.

144. Spoken to a servant. Oedipus appears as King 'with retinue and guard.'

151–158. The oracle, personified only by metaphor at line 151, actually becomes in the course of the stanza the living goddess *Φάμα*. It comes to life, as it were, and it is a mistake to give it a capital letter on its first appearance, before the process has been accomplished.

The chorus represent, conventionally, not realistically, the people of Thebes, summoned (144) to hear the purport of Creon's news. There is no reason, however, to suppose that the suppliants have left the theatre as well as the altar-steps. It is assumed here that the people of Thebes, as distinguished from the suppliants, have heard nothing but rumour as to the content of the oracular message. Just as Creon called his ambiguous news 'good,' so the chorus call the message (of which they are still ignorant) by many good names, in order to make it good. That is the psychological motive of their *strophe*. The dramatic effect is quite different: for us, who have heard the tragic hints of the opening scene, the air becomes charged with the mysterious voices of oracles that are alive and will, quite literally, 'fulfil themselves.' The form of the song is symmetrical. First we have 'the oracle of Zeus,' then a cry to the Healer Apollo, then the oracle again. Delphi is rich in gold: the oracle is the 'child of golden hope.' Thebes is 'splendid' as Delphi is golden...a worthy place of visit for the oracle, which may feel at home there, and be kind!

153. The rhythm puts *φοβερὰν φρένα*, when first uttered, into construction with *ἐκτέταμαι*, but the stronger *δείματι πάλλων* draws it away again by claiming it as object.

155–156. 'What thing, what *χρέος*, new or old....' This sentence is

so phrased as to become for the audience subtly sinister. The word χρέος means, in combination with ἐξανύσεις, something like 'debt,' the phrase being equivalent to ἐκπράξεις χρέος.

But there is also felt a suggestion of the use of the word in the sense of a 'rite.' The mention of 'the revolving seasons' adds to the effect of this suggestion—and, in the end, though not yet, we shall realise that Oedipus has, like the seasons, waxed and waned, and, in that sense, paid the debt of nature. At this point the phrase simply strikes us as vaguely sinister. At line 377 a light touch recalls the emotional value, nor is the repeated use of χρεία, 725 (Jebb), 1174, 1435, altogether irrelevant to this point. But it is at 1082 ff. that we realise how the subtle preparation of the poet has made us receive more sympathetically the tragic emotion. I do not mean, of course, that we consciously connect the lines in our thought: I only mean that the emotional effects are greater because of the subconscious reminiscence.

159. ἄμβροτε connects the appeal to the divine helpers with the invocation of the oracle. It is shocking to find that Bruhn accepts Wecklein's ἄντομαι. Just as 'deathless' connects the antistrophe with the end of the strophe, so 'Daughter of Zeus' links the beginning of the antistrophe with the beginning of the strophe. The appeal to Phoebus, the central divinity of our play, comes just where it does, in order to correspond exactly with the cry to Apollo the Healer in the strophe.

159–162. The choice of the divinities is not made at random. The passage derives splendour from our unconscious memory of lines 20 ff. Athene is first for an Athenian: Artemis and (18 ff.) Apollo are a natural pair: Zeus, whose interpreter is Apollo, naturally has his place here. We shall hear more of that fact. With some hesitation I have accepted Elmsley's Εὔκλεα (LΓ εὐκλία, A εὐκλεῖ, Scholiast Εὔκλεια): Pindar, however, applies the adjective to the ἀγορά at Athens (*fr.* 75 5).

166. The mention of the 'flame of affliction' gives a first hint of the coming development of the theme introduced at line 27.

171 ff. Three troubles are named, corresponding to the priest's description: blight on crops, barrenness of women, the pestilence. The sense runs on without a break from ἄλλον to ὄλλυται. ὧν = ἐκείνων ὧν.

176. At the end of the first antistrophe, and again at the end of the second strophe, the metaphor of fire.

179. It is again no accident that has made the poet recall the word ἀνάριθμος. That fact is so obvious that I only mention it in order to suggest the probability that we are meant to feel the more subtle effects of such repetitions as, *e.g.*, χρυσέας (157), χρυσέα (187).

180. θαναταφόρα certainly reminds us of Thuc. II 51 5: when we hear ἄλλον... we can hardly help recalling Thuc. II 52 2: and the repeated

ἀνάριθμος makes us think of Thuc. III 87. But the points of similarity in the two descriptions do not justify us in dating the play after the famous historical plague.

186. The fire is becoming more and more important. We have heard how the souls fly to the west like fire: now, in the lamentation, we hear how the sudden cry for aid *λάμπει*, and how Athene shall send 'the bright face of comfort and rescue': she is Daughter of Zeus, because we are to be moved by the reminiscence of 151, 159: she is 'golden' to recall 'golden hope.'

198–9. If you doubt Kayser's *τελεῖ* (MSS *τέλει*, Hermann *τελεῖν*), remember the effect of *ἐξανύσεις* in 156. Notice also that there is here a tragic ambiguity which makes the words apply to Oedipus. For him while all is hidden in night's darkness, all seems well: the light of day 'cometh to destroy.'

200. *πυρφόρων*, like *πυρφόρους* in 206, fulfils the promise of a development of the theme of line 27. Against the burning pestilence the gods are invoked with their fires. By the choice of the word *κράτη* and by the invocation of Zeus as Father, Sophocles prepares our emotion for the significant contrast between the transient earthly authority of Oedipus and the permanent sway of the only true King of gods and men. (See line 903.) The significance of the Creon scenes owes much to this idea. It is worth noticing that Apollo here has no fire. Zeus is to strike against the plague with his lightning: Artemis is to come with her blazing torches: Bacchus is to drive sorrow and darkness away by the appearance of his revel rout. *οἰνῶπα* and *ἀγλαῶπι* recall *εὐῶπα* (189): the gold recalls touches which we have already noticed: as the god of pestilence *φλέγει με*, so Bacchus comes *φλέγοντα*: in answer to the cries of anguish the Dionysiac cry is to be raised, *εὔιον*. The full value of this excited climax will be realised if you turn to lines 1105 ff. But Apollo is to come only with arrows—not dealing death, as do the arrows of Apollo in the *Iliad*, but *ἀρωγά*. In the next choral ode, when the murderer is tracked to his doom, Apollo, the son of Zeus, will pursue him 'armed with the fire and the lightning.' It is for the sake of that tragic development that here Apollo is invoked without the fire!

216. The King supervenes upon the turmoil of distress and the passion of appeal to the gods. The effect of his first words is to heighten our sense of his greatness and of his dangerous self-confidence. Compare (and contrast) the return of Eteocles in *Septem* 165 ff.

217. To 'tend a disease' means, in Greek as in English, to try to cure it: yet I think there is, for the audience, a hint of tragic irony.

220–221. Probably there is corruption, and the direction in which we should look for the solution is suggested by *μὴ κιχών*, which I find that Headlam was once inclined to accept. 'I, the discoverer of hidden

truths, should not have investigated it long—had I been here—without finding a clue.' This makes τι right.

224. I agree with Professor Murray that the King pauses, first before his proclamation which begins with the *formal* line 224, then after each request for information (*i.e.*, at lines 226, 229, 232). There is a long pause at 232 where Oedipus has finished his enumeration of the possible alternatives: as the guilty person is to be found in Thebes, he assumes that someone knows the truth (the chorus, as Bruhn remarks, standing for the whole of Thebes): the first group of three lines asks anyone who knows to speak: the second appeals to the guilty man to denounce himself: the third appeals to anyone who knows that another is guilty.

227. MSS ὑπεξελὼν | αὐτός, edd. ὑπεξελεῖν. Jebb's ὑπεξελεῖν αὐτὸν καθ' αὑτοῦ is only made possible by supplying σημαίνοντα which, I believe, is quite indefensible. The sense required is really given if we hold ὑπεξελεῖν (with Bruhn) to mean 'to bring out the charge from the secret place, his heart, in which it now lies.' We want the clear distinction between one who knows his own guilt and one who knows his neighbour's. Construe literally:—'And if he fears to produce the charge himself bringing it against himself—why' (there is a simple ellipse) 'he shall suffer no worse penalty than banishment.'

230. The stress is on ἄλλον contrasted with αὐτὸς of 228. 'Or if he knows another man as guilty....' I print, with some reluctance, ἢ ἐξ (MSS ἐξ) ἄλλης χθονὸς τὸν αὐτόχειρα (Vauvilliers), quite a natural expression since ἄλλον when heard naturally strikes us as meaning 'another Theban'; literally, 'some other man as the murderer or someone from another land.' If we could accept εἴτ' αὐτόχειρα and χερός, there would be no need for ἢ which is indeed rather in the way. I am indeed inclined to think that mention of a foreigner is out of place. 233–234 should sum up what has been said, αὐτοῦ corresponding to αὐτὸς in 228, and φίλου to ἄλλον in 230.

235. The vigorous δράσω has an effect like that of ἔπραξα (69). What can Oedipus, in fact, do, if those who know about the crime will not speak? He can threaten them with punishment if they are ever discovered to have known, but he can do more than this. By pronouncing the sentence of outlawry on the unknown criminal, and by cutting him off from the domestic and religious privileges of the city, he can actually bring home to those who know anything of the crime the danger that they run by being silent: the outlaw's presence in their home or at any sacrifice, means, for all concerned, pollution and disaster. The paragraph, 236 ff., is therefore a threat to the silent but possibly innocent citizen, though those critics are mistaken who suppose that the outlawry is here pronounced on anyone except the murderer.

237. This strong and formal assertion of authority recalls the words

of Creon in the proclamation scene of the *Antigone* (162 ff.), a play which I believe to be earlier than the *Oedipus*. Creon's proclamation there is so arranged by Sophocles that it recalls the first address of Eteocles in the *Septem*, and the particular phrase recalled has a special value because, by the sudden shift from ὅτ' οὖν ἐκεῖνοι...ὤλοντο (170) to the vivid ἐγὼ κράτη δὴ πάντα καὶ θρόνους ἔχω (173), the confident and overbearing character, which is to ruin Creon, is revealed. Here the assertion of authority is less overbearing—νέμω here has not the effect of ἔχω there—but the phrase contributes to the growing sense of the perilous power of the King. See 14, 40, 54, and the mention of the κράτη of the only really Great King in 201. We shall hear much more of this theme.

238–240. Normal and formal grammar expects μηδὲ θύμασιν, but the dramatist knows how to make his characters think while they speak. The result of using μήτε throughout this passage is this: first we hear 'that none should either speak to him or receive him'; then, as if this double prohibition had been expressed as one prohibition (only half a sentence, beginning with the μήτε which demands a second μήτε) we hear 'nor make him a sharer in prayer or sacrifice.' But this second double prohibition is in its turn treated as one, and answered by 'nor give him a place in the lustration.' The effect is a more vigorous expression of μήτε welcome-or-speak μήτε make-him-partner-in-prayer-or-sacrifice: but even that is not vigorous enough, a third μήτε creates the new classification prayer and sacrifice-or-libation. Grammatically μήτε at the beginning of 239 couples the whole idea of 238 with the whole idea of 239–240, but the μήτε of 240 couples νέμειν with ποιεῖσθαι.

244. There is a pause before this line. The formal proclamation of the city's duty is ended. Now begins the royal curse upon the unknown person or persons guilty of the murder. The curse is the King's security for the observance of his command, since to harbour the criminal who is under such a ban is doubly dangerous. To show that he himself is prepared to obey his own injunction the King, therefore, invokes the ban on his own head if he voluntarily entertain the murderers.

247. The words are carefully chosen for the irony. The obvious meaning is: 'Whether it be one person, this unknown criminal, or whether it be a company.' But the shift to πλειόνων μέτα makes it possible for the hearer to feel the other meaning 'if it be one man all unknown and unsuspected,' the last man one would expect, Oedipus himself! But this slight touch of irony is not the only result. We are made to see also the mind of Oedipus at work: the notion that the work was done by a number of robbers bribed by someone at Thebes, is haunting him. So, having spoken of the doer, he unconsciously betrays his opinion by adding, not 'or the doers,' but 'whether he was one or whether he had many

helpers.' This reveals to us that he is not thinking simply of the alternative 'one or many' but of the possibility of *one chief criminal* who *used* the many. The mind is ready for the suspicion against Creon.

251. The shift from the single criminal to the plural τοῖσδε is explained by my note on 247. It is the plural that sticks in the mind of Oedipus. This fine psychological touch has the further merit that it prepares the audience for the importance which is to be attached to the distinction between the one and the many. If it were not for such preparation we should find lines 842–845, particularly the last line, somewhat unnatural.

252. The return, after the curse is pronounced on the murderer, to the duty of the citizens, is natural in view of the fact which I have mentioned in my note on 244. From this point the speech flows without a break to its natural conclusion: the main thoughts are: 'Citizens, do your duty: I pronounce a curse on all who conceal any clue: but all who do their duty have my prayers for their delivery.'

257. τε is psychologically right. Oedipus thinks Kingship very important. See line 128. It is because he thinks it so important that the mention of the Kingship of Laïus leads him to digress in the next line.

258. It is not quite accurate to say that κυρῶ τ' ἐγὼ = ἐγώ τε κυρῶ (Jebb and others), since what Oedipus says is: 'I *am* King in his place, and I *am* the husband of his wife, and I *should have been* even more closely related to him by his children and mine....'

The effect again is to make us feel that Oedipus counts the royal office as a great matter. Those who find that the tragic irony of 261–4 is rather crude, have perhaps not always realised that the irony is not the only value of the lines. The character of Oedipus appears: Kings matter to him. So do all natural ties of kinship: and it is because his feeling for such ties is so sensitive that his tragedy matters to us.

263. The choice of the words is important. Fortune, of which we shall have more to say (see note on 442), leaps also on the head of Oedipus (1311). There is no trace in this play of the *superstitious* notion of the inherited curse: but the tragic value of such a touch as this depends partly on the memory of the use of such themes in the earlier poetry.

267–268. The recital of the pedigree makes the citizens realise the importance of the King and the dreadfulness of the crime. It also recalls the speech from the personal and emotional tone of 260 ff., to the more formal tone of a public proclamation. Finally it reveals again the high sense which Oedipus himself has of the importance of ancient dignities and a sound ancestry.

270. For the prayer compare the solemn words of Cambyses (when he has recovered his sanity) Hdt. III 65 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ποιεῦσι ὑμῖν γῇ τε

καρπὸν ἐκφέροι καὶ γυναῖκές τε καὶ ποῖμναι τίκτοιεν, otherwise τὰ ἐναντία τούτοισι ἀρῶμαι ὑμῖν γενέσθαι, καὶ πρὸς ἔτι τούτοισι τὸ τέλος Περσέων ἑκάστῳ ἐπιγενέσθαι οἷον ἐμοὶ ἐπιγέγονε.

280–281. This is pious, true, and, to us who know the sequel, tragic. The associations of the commonplace are already tragic, as we may see if we read Herodotus IX 16. Jocasta at 724 expresses the positive, and for her destiny, even more terrible, aspect of this truth.

285. Observe that Teiresias does not, because he is Apollo's prophet, see all things exactly as Apollo sees them: he sees *more than other men*, and is *the most like* to Apollo. That is all. Scholars who argue about the conduct of Teiresias in the past, and infer that he was neglectful, unscrupulous, fraudulent, do not allow for this limitation. Sophocles leaves vague the question of his past knowledge. We have no right to assume that he could have prevented the whole tragedy by speaking earlier. Even when he first appears it is not certain that he knows why he has come! As Apollo gives him light, so he sees. And when he sees the truth, he realises the meaning of much that had before been vague.

287. The effect of the grammatical shift, ἐπραξάμην suddenly taking the place of some word like κατέλιπον (Jebb), is vigorous. Scholars who have objected to the phrase have not felt the character of Oedipus in lines 69, 77, 235.

288. Another hint of the suspicion that is soon to be felt by Oedipus. Though he feels no suspicion as he says these words, the fact that he says them makes us able to see the growth of the suspicion beneath all irritation at Teiresias. We know what is coming when in 357 we hear πρὸς τοῦ διδαχθείς, and can realise, because of this subtle preparation, what is happening in the King's mind just before 378.

289. Similarly the delay and the King's irritation at it, are psychologically connected both for the King and for the audience with the coming storm of passion. See above, 74. μὴ παρὼν is not exactly 'Why he is not here?' but more vigorous: the effect is something like 'Is he not here yet? Strange....'

292. Though all highwaymen are wayfarers, all wayfarers are not brigands. Oedipus is intelligent, but not now calm and critical as a judge. The object of these lines, however, is not to show us that Oedipus is less keen-witted than he might be, but to remind us that he is thinking of a band of robbers, and to prepare us, naturally and without mechanical insistence on the point, for the importance of the distinction between one traveller and a company of brigands.

296. The tragic irony is obvious, but it cuts deeper than most critics have seen. It is in vain that Creon, once suspected by Oedipus of the guilt of the deed, places himself under the ban of a solemn oath. Further,

the deluded King is unable to perceive the wisdom of Creon's pious moralising, which is a warning, if he could only see it, to himself. Finally, pious caution prescribes a careful watch, not only on the hand, but on the tongue. Reckless words play a part in the tragic self-discovery, both of Oedipus and of Jocasta.

300. See Jebb on *νωμῶν*. Add that the phrase here used, with *πάντα* for the *ὄρνιθας* of Aesch. *Septem* 26, prepares our minds, subtly and without our conscious perception of it, for the suggestion of *κέρδος* as the motive of the seer, because we half remember the Homeric *κέρδεα νωμῶν*. The whole formula is a variant, more impressive and mysterious, of *Il.* I 70.

305. I suppose no unsophisticated spectator would find any difficulty here. Yet it is necessary, since learned commentators have accused the seer of deliberate falsehood (because of lines 318, 329, 333, and 447), to insist upon the fact that a seer is never supposed to be omniscient. Just as Oedipus can make us feel how wonderful Teiresias must be, since he knows, by instinct, the terrible state of Theban affairs (the audience know, and feel that Teiresias knows, that Oedipus himself is the *νόσος* of line 303), so he can also, quite naturally, assume that Teiresias will not know about Apollo's oracle unless the messengers happen to have told him! A prophet knows just as much or as little as the God reveals to him at any given moment. The dramatist can therefore assume that he knows just as much or as little as it is dramatically convenient for him to know.

316. The prophet speaks, of course, of his own terrible knowledge. But the proverb applies tragically to Oedipus. His wisdom profits not; and that is a guiding thought throughout this scene. It is a commonplace that *qui ipse sibi sapiens prodesse non quit, nequiquam sapit* (Ennius *Med.* 15 Ribbeck); *cf.* Eur. *fr.* 905 *μισῶ σοφιστὴν ὅστις οὐχ αὑτῷ σόφος*, quoted by Cicero *Fam.* XIII 15 together with Homer's *ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω videre*, as a maxim of common prudence. Plato (*Hip. Maj.* 283 B) applies it mischievously to the sophists who make a good income out of their wisdom. But there is another and a higher meaning. True wisdom that really profits the possessor is found only in Sophrosyne: *τὸ μὴ κακῶς φρονεῖν θεοῦ μέγιστον δῶρον*. As I have shown (Introduction, Chap. IV), this idea is of the first importance for the understanding of our play. A cruder artist, as Sophocles himself is in the *Antigone*, would make Oedipus fall *because* he lacks Sophrosyne: actually he makes his fall more tremendous and more sympathetic by showing *that* he lacks it. The kind of wisdom that profits not is well-known. First, the wisdom that makes a man proud and obstinate like the Creon of the *Antigone* (707, 722, 726), is displayed by Oedipus in 396, 625.

Secondly the confidence in his own intellect which makes a man rash and impetuous in his judgments appears at 617 ff.

All this is perhaps obvious. I mention it because the phrase τέλη λύειν suggests to some critics a certain worldliness or cynicism—'Wisdom that does not pay.' If we avoid this erroneous impression we shall be better able to understand a similar remark of Creon about 'goods that involve solid advantage.' See my note on 595. True wisdom lies in knowledge of oneself, which in two senses Oedipus at present lacks: true gain lies in the modest mean. See also notes on 380, 398, 434, 626.

318. Those critics who consider that Sophocles was drawing a realistic picture of a rather fraudulent old 'medicine-man' naturally think that the reluctance of Teiresias is assumed. Some even suggest that he is hatefully egging on Oedipus to impiety. But prophets and seers—I do not know about 'medicine-men'—are generally reluctant to speak unpleasant truths. Sophocles, who does make Teiresias human, makes him speak under stress of natural and justified anger. But I think that a consideration of *Il.* 1 76 f. and of *Antig.* 1031, 1060 will show that the reluctance to speak is not assumed. Moreover, had he known what truth he would have to face, Teiresias would, as he says, have made excuse for not appearing. ταῦτα in line 317 is vaguer than Jebb thinks. It does not refer simply to the fact that 'wisdom is terrible when it profits not the wise,' but to 'all this truth' which now, for the first time, floods into the mind of the horrified seer. It is while Oedipus speaks that Teiresias first realises the whole truth, of which before he had vague premonitions. He knew it all before, in a sense, but only vaguely; and he had always lost sight of the full significance of what he knew. Sophocles makes him more impressive by not telling us exactly how much or how little his previous knowledge was.

322–325. I have already remarked that 296 hints at the importance of restraint in word as well as deed. The hint is here made explicit. The King accuses the prophet of uttering lawless words: the reply is a warning as well as a rebuke. I believe that the prophet is perfectly sincere. He wishes to conceal his knowledge that Oedipus is the murderer, not because he is afraid, but because he is human, and therefore, at present, feels that he cannot bear to speak. But he knows that if anger takes him, he, like Oedipus, will lose control of his tongue. I apologise for this explanation of the obvious. My excuse must be that the scene is generally misunderstood.

329. Teiresias is purposely ambiguous, because he is trying to prevent Oedipus from suspecting the truth. He shields him from truth by speaking of the secret as 'My sorrows...not to call them thine.' This

version may be, as Prof. Platt suggests, 'in the style of the poet Bunn,' but after all Sophocles is writing Greek, not translation English. In view of the similar evasion in 320 and 332 of the fact that Prof. Platt has no real parallel for his extraordinary repetition of μή, and of the pointlessness (to me) of Elmsley's interpretation, I have ventured to follow Jebb. If I am right, there is a dramatic value in the words. What makes Oedipus so quickly suspect that the old man's silence is due to implication in the guilt of the murder? Oedipus does not suddenly, without all reason, simply because the prophet is rather irritatingly obstinate, accuse him of regicide! Teiresias, in his desire to spare the King, has put him only too effectively off the scent. The words 'my sorrows' sound to Oedipus like an inadvertent confession that the truth, if known, would somehow implicate Teiresias in the crime. Notice, as a subtle hint of the process of suspicion, the choice of the word ξυνειδὼς in 330. The rage which induces so pious a man as Oedipus to speak line 334, is the fruit of that suspicion. The supreme merit of Sophocles is here. We see his characters thinking behind the words: and their thought outruns their words, as in real life.

334. The insult of the phrase ὦ κακῶν κάκιστε is realised by Oedipus, who checks himself with a quieter καὶ γὰρ.... The long and heavy words in 336 are due to this suppressed emotion. But it is a mistake to suppose that the leader of the chorus intervenes 'to check him.' Murray's rendering 'Thou devil,' however, gives a good notion of the sort of effect given by the phrase of Oedipus, which is shocking to chorus and audience.

337. It is of some importance to determine in what tone this speech should be delivered by an actor. Professor Murray, who thinks that Teiresias ought to be presented as 'dark, unkempt, and sinister,' naturally thinks here of a malignant old wretch, triumphing in venomous hate. I venture to disagree. Oedipus, in his curse and indeed throughout the play, uses language which to the audience is full of sinister meaning. In much the same way, the prophet, meaning to answer Oedipus with warning and rebuke, uses a phrase which to the audience suggests the terrible secret of which his mind is full. Normal phrases would be τὴν δὲ σὴν οἷα τίς ἐστιν or οἷα δέ σοι σύνεστιν ὀργὴ or τὴν δὲ σὴν ὁμοίαν οὖσαν or the like. The phrase which comes to the seer's lips, not because he is malignant, but because his mind is at work in the effort to keep himself from speaking wildly, actually hints at the incest of Jocasta. Had the words been spoken as Prof. Murray suggests, Oedipus could hardly have answered, as he does, with a restrained apology for his anger, and an appeal to patriotism. For Oedipus has, as the sequel shows, been haunted by fear of incest. The hint of Teiresias is so light that it can thrill the audience and yet be unnoticed by the king himself. Notice

that Teiresias means, not 'you are angry,' but 'you blame me for being stubborn and harsh, yet do not realise your own obstinacy.' Oedipus, for the moment checked by the sense that he has indeed been too violent, interprets the speech as simply a rebuke for anger. The fundamental notion which makes all this kind of thing doubly effective for a Greek audience is stated, *e.g.*, by Democritus (Diels 80 p. 403): *αἰσχρὸν τὰ ὀθνεῖα πολυπραγμονέοντα ἀγνοεῖν τὰ οἰκήϊα.*

340–341. For the third time Oedipus insists on the prophet's duty to the city. This repeated appeal has its effect, and, for a moment, the prophet wavers. The event must come, even if he is silent. Shall he keep silence and be thought unpatriotic? As Oedipus presses home his appeal in 342, not, I think, scornfully, but earnestly, the seer again decides to spare himself, and, for the moment, the King. But he cannot, being human, resist the temptation of adding to his decision the provoking words which bring from Oedipus a burst of anger and an imputation of guilt which finally breaks down his determination to be silent. For the phrase in 341, *cf.* Cassandra's words *Ag.* 1239.

345–346. Oedipus gives way to anger, and is therefore likely to be self-deceived. *Cf.* *ἐπιπολάζειν οὔτι χρὴ τὸν θυμόν, ἀλλὰ τὸν νόον· | οὐδὲ εἷς οὐδὲν μετ' ὀργῆς μετὰ τρόπον βουλεύεται* (Epicharmus, Diels 43, 44 p. 96). The reign of Law, says Aristotle, is better than the government of a monarch, because 'in general that which is free from passion is better' (in governing) 'than that which is by nature subject to passion. Well, the law is free from passion, but every human soul necessarily subject to it' (*Pol.* Γ′ 15 5 1286 a). Then he adds that democracy is preferable to monarchy because 'when the individual is mastered by anger or some other passion of this kind, his judgment must necessarily be spoilt, whereas in a large mass of people it is a difficult business for all at the same moment to fall into rage and so go wrong (*ὀργισθῆναι καὶ ἁμαρτεῖν*).' Yet the wise Pericles (Thuc. II 22), when he saw that his people were annoyed, *πρὸς τὸ παρὸν χαλεπαίνοντας καὶ οὐ τὰ ἄριστα φρονοῦντας* (notice this phrase, and see my remarks on line 316) did not call an assembly *τοῦ μὴ ὀργῇ τι μᾶλλον ἢ γνώμῃ ξυνελθόντας ἐξαμαρτεῖν.* When the prudent Diodotus is opposing the suggestions of Creon, who would make Athens a tyrant, he reminds his hearers that 'the two things which are most opposed to good judgment are these:—hurry and anger' *τάχος καὶ ὀργήν* Thuc. III 42, *cf.* *O.T.* 617.

The Homeric *κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ* (*Il.* I 80) reminds us how ancient is the proverbial connection of anger and kingship: the tyrant is *ὀργὴν ἄκρος* (*ὡς διέδεξε*, for instance, Cyaxares, Hdt. I 73). So Croesus, having himself learnt Sophrosyne, advises Cyrus in dealing with Sardis, *μὴ πάντα θυμῷ χρέο*, and Cyrus wisely,

ὑπεὶς τῆς ὀργῆς, spares the city (Hdt. I 155–156): later he vainly offers similar advice, ὦ βασιλεῦ, μὴ πάντα ἡλικίῃ καὶ θυμῷ ἐπίτρεπε...· ἀγαθόν τι πρόνοον εἶναι, σοφὸν δὲ ἡ προμηθίη (III 36).

347. The audience, though not Teiresias, have seen this suspicion growing in the mind of the King. It is important, if we are to judge Teiresias fairly, to realise that the King's accusation is to him as unexpected as is his own reply to Oedipus.

353. Oedipus has no thought of the accusation which is to come. He does not even now quite realise what Teiresias means. That is made natural by the choice of the phrase, which means 'a polluter of this land,' not 'the polluter whom you are seeking.'

356. Proverbial. *Cf.* Soph. *fr.* 529 θάρσει· λέγων τἀληθὲς οὐ σφαλῇ ποτε, 869 τἀληθὲς...πλεῖστον ἰσχύει, Eur. *fr.* 343 θάρσει τό τοι δίκαιον ἰσχύει μέγα, *Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 30 N. p. 845 οὐκ οἶδα· τἀληθὲς γὰρ ἀσφαλὲς φράσαι, a refusal to speak, which might have been expressed in the form of *O.T.* 569, 1520.

357. Oedipus does not exactly realise what Teiresias has meant, but assumes that he is talking at random. His assertion that the words were not taught the prophet by his art, is not in any way a reflection on the art of prophecy. All that is meant is that since the words are obviously false, they cannot be the product of the seer's skill. But the audience perceive that the words πρὸς τοῦ διδαχθείς, once spoken, leave their impression in the King's mind. He is on the way to the suspicion that Creon set Teiresias his task!

358. I believe this line is sincere and true. Teiresias spoke against his will, mastered by anger at a base accusation against himself.

360. For ἐκπειρᾷ *cf.* Hdt. III 135.

368. Whether we read ταῦτ' or ταὔτ', the word ἀεί shows that Oedipus does not clearly understand the last accusation of the seer. Lines 366–367 are, in fact, ambiguous. Though for the audience, and, of course, for Teiresias they have only one clear reference (to the incest), to Oedipus, whose mind is full of the new, and terrible, suggestion that he has murdered Laïus, they naturally suggest only the pollution of his marriage with the wife of a man whom he has killed. It is important to understand that this scene is not a vague collection of insults and reproaches, but a gradual development. Until 415 Oedipus has no thought of the oracles about incest and parricide.

371–374. The Greeks said: ὁπποῖόν κ' εἴπησθα ἔπος, τοῖόν κ' ἐπακούσαις (*Il.* XX 250), or, as the wise Cheilon is said to have put it (Diels p. 521 l. 19, Mullach Vol. I p. 212), μὴ κακολόγει τοὺς πλησίον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἀκούσῃ ἐφ' οἷς λυπηθήσῃ. Pittacus also was supposed to have said (Diels p. 522 l. 13, Mullach Vol. I p. 213) ἀπραγοῦντα (κακο-

πραγοῦντα Mullach) μὴ ὀνείδιζε· ἐπὶ γὰρ τούτοις νέμεσις θεῶν κάθηται. *Cf.* Eur. *fr.* 130 τὰς συμφορὰς γὰρ τῶν κακῶς πεπραγότων | οὐπώποθ' ὕβρισ', αὐτὸς ὀρρωδῶν παθεῖν, and Democritus (Diels 107 a p. 405) ἄξιον ἀνθρώπους ὄντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων ξυμφοραῖς μὴ γελᾶν, ἀλλ' ὀλοφύρεσθαι.

376. Professor Murray's defence of the reading οὐ γάρ με μοῖρα πρός γε σοῦ πεσεῖν is, at first sight, attractive. But I think it unlikely that Sophocles would allow Teiresias to be irrevelant, and, if this reading is right, irrelevant he must be. He must say 'I am not fated to fall at your hands: Apollo who is immediately concerned with this present business, is quite competent to see to that also!' γε makes inevitable the suggestion that Teiresias is to fall by the hand of Apollo! Moreover, the obvious and generally accepted emendation adds much to the dramatic value of the scene. We have noticed hints of a coming suspicion of Creon. Now Oedipus, having scoffed at the notion that this blind old man, however venomous, can really overthrow him, is arrested by hearing: 'It is not thy fate to fall by my hands....' That is the moment at which the thought of Creon suddenly becomes vivid in the King's mind. See also note on 379.

379. δὲ has been misunderstood. Jebb translates 'Nay, Creon...' and says that δὲ introduces an objection as in *Tr.* 729, *O.C.* 395, 1443. In the first two passages we could perfectly well have 'Yes, but...,' so that they are not really parallel. The third example is more like our own passage: and is, I think, to be explained in a similar way. The speaker proceeds, not quite as if he had not been interrupted, but keeping a formal connection with his own last words, though answering the interrupter. Polyneices says, 'Seek not to persuade me...and these things...': 'these things' are in fact the possibilities suggested by Antigone in her cry of sorrow. Similarly, here, Teiresias says: 'It is not thy fate to fall at my hands...Apollo is enough...,' then hears the mention of Creon, and continues 'And Creon....' If I am right, we have a composition perfectly balanced—not I, the seer, but Apollo, not Creon, your princely brother, but yourself!

380 ff. Oedipus has understood only that Teiresias accuses him of being the murderer of Laïus, polluted also by marriage with his victim's wife. He has immediately leapt into the suspicion that Teiresias has been induced, partly by bribery, partly by his own jealousy of the King's renown for wisdom, to trump up an accusation whose effect will be to place Creon on the throne. The long speech of Oedipus therefore marks a stage in the development of the plot. Morally also it marks a stage in the revelation of the King's tendency—it is no more than a tendency—to become a typical 'tyrant.' One of the most fixed and commonplace

characteristics of the type is the inability to trust true friends: another is a dislike and contempt for the wisdom of the intelligent critic.

Zeus himself, according to Aeschylus, in his early days, when he was *ὁ τῶν θεῶν τύραννος* (*P. V.* 222), *τραχὺς καὶ παρ' ἑαυτῷ τὸ δίκαιον ἔχων* (186), *ἰδίοις νόμοις κρατύνων* (402), *ἐς τὰ πάνθ' ὁμῶς βίαιος* (736), was subject to this despotic failing: *ἔνεστι γάρ πως τοῦτο τῇ τυραννίδι νόσημα, τοῖς φίλοισι μὴ πεποιθέναι.* Time had to teach him a lesson (*cf. O. T.* 613, 1213, *O. C.* 7). Πρ. *ὦμοι. Ἑρ. τόδε Ζεὺς τοὔπος οὐκ ἐπίσταται.* | Πρ. *ἀλλ' ἐκδιδάσκει πάνθ' ὁ γηράσκων χρόνος* (980).

Out of many examples of the application of this commonplace I select: Eur. *fr.* 605: Kingship, *τυραννίς*, so much admired, is really wretched...forced to destroy its loyal friends by the fear of disloyalty, *μὴ δράσωσί τι.* The exact reading is doubtful, but the general sense is certain. Xen. *Hiero* II 10: others think themselves safe from their enemies when they are within their own city walls: the tyrant is not safe even in his own house, but thinks that he must keep his watch there more than anywhere else. Isocr. *περὶ εἰρήνης* 181 e: tyrants must *ἀπιστεῖν τοῖς φίλοις καὶ τοῖς ἑταίροις τοῖς αὑτῶν.* Aristotle *Pol.* H′ (E′) 11 10 p. 1313 b: the power of a King is preserved by his friends: it is characteristic of a tyrant to distrust his friends. In Plut. *Mor.* 152 A Cleobulus asserts that the King or tyrant can best secure his glory by 'trusting none of his associates.' Following the stock ideas Dio Chrys. (I § 81) represents Tyrannis as *φοβουμένη καὶ ἀγωνιῶσα καὶ ἀπιστοῦσα καὶ ὀργιζομένη*, and the tyrant (II § 75) as *ὑπονοῆσαι ταχύς,...τοὺς κακοὺς αὔξων, τοῖς κρείττοσι φθονῶν,...φίλον οὐδένα νομίζων οὐδ' ἔχων*: the good general counts friendship his best and most sacred possession, protects his happiness, not so much by material defences as by *τῇ πίστει τῶν φίλων*, but (III § 116) the tyrant is of all men the most destitute of friendship: (VI § 52) tyrants think 'everything is full of plots and ambushes.' Pindar *Pyth.* III 70 may be cited for the benefit of those critics who do not realise that the stock characteristics of the bad King were already proverbial before the word *τύραννος* had become an insult. When Pindar calls his patron *πραὺς ἀστοῖς, οὐ φθονέων ἀγαθοῖς, ξείνοις δὲ θαυμαστὸς πατήρ*, he is distinguishing Hiero from bad Kings who, preferring strangers to their own subjects, are harsh to their citizens and envious of the good. Hiero is a father to the foreigner, but he has not the defects of his qualities. The best commentary on this compliment will be found in Aristotle *Pol.* H′ (E′) 11 12 ff. 1314 a: the tyrant 'dislikes everyone who has dignity or independence...he likes foreigners better than citizens...' he is 'at war with the good' because of the notion that they are dangerous to his power. This notion has its influence on the stories which are told of tyrannical men: see, for instance, Thucydides

on Pausanias, who was betrayed by Argilios, *παιδικά ποτε ὢν αὐτοῦ καὶ πιστότατος ἐκείνῳ*, as a result of his own suspicion and treachery (I 132). The temper of Cleon, when he urged the democracy to become an imperial tyrannis is no product of mythistoria, but his language is the language of this commonplace:—'Your Empire is a tyranny, whose subjects plot against you and are governed against their will: they obey you, not because of the favours which you confer on them to your own detriment, but because of the advantage which your strength, not their good will, confers upon you.' Subjects, says the Tyrant, are of necessity and always enemies of their ruler (Thuc. III 37 and 40).

In general, proverbial wisdom teaches, envy attacks all that is eminent, conspicuous. As Democritus (?) observes, the poor are exempt from the greatest of evils *ἐπιβουλήν, φθόνον καὶ μῖσος οἷς οἱ πλούσιοι καθ' ἡμέραν συνοικοῦσιν* (Mullach Vol. I p. 343 fr. 40). Flattering himself and his patron, Pindar asserts that envy 'fastens ever on the good, and strives not against the inferior' (*Nem.* VIII 23). Gods are made in the image of men, and naturally share this unpleasant characteristic. So the victorious athlete is exposed to envy: but Pindar's treatment of this theme is most elaborate when he is celebrating Kings or 'tyrants,' since they have not only athletic success but great wealth and power; they are almost as happy as the gods. This explains, for instance, *Pyth.* II: line 91 refers to the greed of the *φθονεροί*, excited by the King's prosperity: on this see my article, *C. R.* Vol. XXIX Dec. 1915 p. 230. To a great King Pindar will say that it is better to be envied than to be pitied (*Pyth.* I 85), but to a modest youth of Thebes, he will 'condemn the lot of royalty,' preferring 'the middle station,' free from envy, enjoying a more lasting happiness (*Pyth.* XI 53). The general principle, that envy attacks all eminence, is stated in Eur. *fr.* 294 *εἰς τἀπίσημα δ' ὁ φθόνος πηδᾶν φιλεῖ*. It attacks *τὰ σεμνά* (*Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 530 N. p. 943), and *τὰ λαμπρά* (*Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 547 N. p. 947). The political application is important in Thucydides. Pericles, for instance, asserts that envy is the inevitable penalty of imperial greatness (II 64). The commonplace gives the explanation of a difficult passage in Eur. *H. F.* 773–780, on which see my note in *C. R.* Vol. XXIX May 1915 p. 68. See also [Plato] *Ep.* III 317 C, D, to Dionysius, Dio Chrys. VI § 50 *ἐπιφθονώτατος ἁπάντων ἀνθρώπων ὁ πλεῖστα κἂν δικαίως ἔχων ὥστε οὐδεὶς τυράννου ἐπιφθονώτερός ἐστι.*

The application to superior intelligence is also common. Pindar, naturally, uses it against his rivals. In general (*Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 531 N. p. 943) *ἅπαν τὸ λίαν συνετόν ἐστ' ἐπίφθονον*. As Medea knew (294 ff.), cleverness was suspected and disliked in ancient Greece as it is in English political life. The skilled craftsman or artist, says Euripides (*fr.* 635),

is more wretched than the common sort of men: because to be exposed to universal criticism is a misfortune, not a good.

The young men of Athens seemed to their parents over-clever, and in Thucydides the Corinthian complaint of the old-fashioned conservatism of Sparta draws an illustration from the importance of 'push and go' in the arts (1 71 3), *ἀνάγκη ὥσπερ τέχνης ἀεὶ τὰ ἐπιγιγνόμενα κρατεῖν...πρὸς πολλὰ ἀναγκαζομένοις ἰέναι πολλῆς καὶ ἐπιτεχνήσεως δεῖ.* That spirit gives life to the words of Oedipus, and the answer of Archidamus that the Spartans are *εὔβουλοι, ἀμαθέστερον τῶν νόμων τῆς ὑπεροψίας παιδευόμενοι...μὴ τὰ ἀχρεῖα συνετοὶ ἄγαν ὄντες,* may also help us to understand this play.

The fact that in the old superstition the gods themselves are envious adds dramatic value to the words of Oedipus. It is not true to say that he falls because of the divine envy: no such superstition is implied in this play. But he does behave, in his suspicious fear that Creon envies him his crown and that Teiresias envies his skill in divination, with that heedlessness and over-confidence which traditionally characterised men whose great prosperity had excited the divine Nemesis.

Notice that the association of wealth and kingship is proverbial, and that the point is intended by the poet to lead to the natural anxiety of the chorus at line 889. See Introduction p. xlviii.

383. In spite of the symptoms of arrogance we are never allowed to lose sympathy with Oedipus. His rule is not a tyranny, but a good 'government' and his powers were conferred upon him by a grateful city. This again is one of the proverbial methods by which the good King, as contrasted with the tyrant, wins his throne. In the heroic age, says Aristotle (*Pol.* Γ′ 14 11 1285 b), men became Kings of willing subjects, for this among other reasons: 'because they had been the first benefactors of the people either in arts or in war.' It was as *εὐεργέτης κατὰ τέχνην* that Oedipus, as we are here reminded, won his place. How important this is, we may judge from another remark of Aristotle (*Pol.* Γ′ 15 11 1286 b): 'They established Kings as a result of beneficence, which is a function only of the good.' When Oedipus used the proverbial tag at 314–315, he was appealing to the principle on which his own authority as a good King was based. Add Eur. *Orest.* 1168: Agamemnon, as head of the Greek forces, *ἦρξ' ἀξιωθείς, οὐ τύραννος....* As usual, Thucydides has employed in his own way the familiar commonplace: Athens asserts to Lacedaemon that she obtained her Empire by beneficence: she does not deserve *οὕτως ἄγαν ἐπιφθόνως διακεῖσθαι,* since it is not by force, *οὐ βιασάμενοι,* but at the request of her allies that she has taken up the burden, *αὐτῶν δεηθέντων.* Presently she uses the more questionable argument, which tyrants also use. See Thuc. 1 75–76 and the further

development, II 63. In the light of this kind of parallel, we can realise the dramatic value of the cry of Oedipus at 628.

388. *φθόνος—κέρδος* go together: see *e.g.* Thuc. III 84 2 'Save for the general overthrow of morality they would not have preferred Gain to that secure Innocence in which Envy would have lost its power of mischief.'

391. The suggestion has actually been made that the silence of Teiresias was, in fact, deliberate and culpable. But prophets, though they may be wiser than other men, are not omniscient. Piety admits it at line 498 ff.

398. At this point Oedipus definitely boasts of his intelligence as better than the skill of any seer. Even for those members of the audience who do not believe in seer-craft, the tone of the King is impious. The correct attitude is prescribed, *e.g.* in a maxim attributed to Bias *ὅτι ἂν ἀγαθὸν πράσσῃς, θεούς, μὴ σεαυτὸν αἰτιῶ.* (Diels p. 523.)

403. *οἷά περ φρονεῖς, sc. κακὰ* Bruhn. The climax of the first movement is thus the assertion of Oedipus, *ὁ κακῶς φρονῶν*, that Teiresias *φρονεῖ κακῶς*. See 462.

408. The word *τυραννίς* was used by Oedipus in 380 as the synonym of *βασιλεία, ἀρχή*. Here, however, the insistence upon the right of free and equal speech, which Tyrants proverbially deny, and the use of the word *κρατῶ* (see notes on 54, 1522) give a sinister sound to *τυραννεῖς*. No good King wishes his subjects to be *δοῦλοι*.

411. Not Creon, but Apollo himself, is the 'patron' of the prophet. Jebb's note though otherwise excellent, misses this point. He makes Teiresias say: 'I am not like a resident-alien who can plead before a civil tribunal only by the mouth of that patron under whom he is registered.' This is true, but Teiresias also makes the audience realise that he *is*, in a sense, a resident-alien, protected by no human Patron. He is Apollo's representative. The use of *προστάτης* in this play deserves attention. Oedipus, with a somewhat excessive respect, calls Teiresias himself *προστάτην* and 'saviour' in 304. In 881 the chorus call on the only sure defence; their Patron and shield is Apollo.

413. This line illustrates the tragic effect which can be produced by a simple adaptation of a familiar moral. The commonplace is stated in Soph. *fr.* 837 *ἀλλ' οἱ κακῶς πράσσοντες οὐ κωφοὶ μόνον, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὁρῶντες εἰσορῶσι τἀμφανῆ.*

415. The direct and simply worded question marks a definite stage in the drama. These words are the first which, without ambiguity, imply, not only that Oedipus is the murderer of his wife's husband, but also that his parentage is somehow tainted. The first suggestion Oedipus can dismiss as the fruit of malicious and venal fraud. But this further question is different. The audience knows, vaguely, yet well enough to respond to the poet's touch, that Oedipus has heard before, from Apollo himself,

of the threatened parricide and incest. It was this fear that drove him to Thebes. Lines 414 ff. must make Oedipus think that, somehow, Teiresias knows of the oracle which he has kept secret even from his wife. Oedipus has no reason to suppose, and does not in fact at all suspect, that Teiresias is speaking of Jocasta and of Laïus in line 417. Nor has he any reason to suppose that in 422 the prophet is speaking of the incestuous marriage. That line, like 414, and 366, is quite adequately explained by the alleged murder of his own wife's consort. Only 424–425 imply, if Oedipus were calm enough to see it, that the marriage of 422 is incestuous as well as disastrous. I have often heard students object to this play that Oedipus must surely be peculiarly obtuse. When the play is acted it becomes clear that the poet has contrived always to explain his hero's failure at each moment to detect the meaning which is so plain to us who know the story.

429. The renewed, and heightened anger of Oedipus is due to the new element which has been introduced at line 415. Oedipus is still indignant at the accusation of murder: he is now profoundly moved also by the discovery that Teiresias now knows something of his own secret fears, and is willing, as it appears, to make malicious use of his knowledge. Since Oedipus does not see the connection between the two denunciations, he naturally is confirmed in his opinion that the prophet is malicious and unscrupulous.

434. *τοὺς ἐμοὺς* has point. The house of the wise Oedipus is no place for a fool's vanities. The line, like 398, betrays the intellectual pride of the hero. *μῶρα* implies criminal folly: see Antigone's words to Creon, Soph. *Ant.* 469–470.

436. This is the first hint given by Teiresias that he knows who were the parents of Oedipus. The hint changes the whole manner of the king. He passes from contemptuous fury to eager questioning. To the audience who know the story vaguely this is a revelation of his whole mental life. It is at once plain that he has brooded long and anxiously on the question he now asks. I must repeat that the latter part of this encounter is not a mere repetition of the former. Down to 403 the chorus have supposed that they have understood all that has been said. After 407 they can say nothing, for they do not understand.

438. The commonplace which makes this line even more tragic for a Greek audience than for us is set forth by Sosiphanes *fr.* 3 N. p. 820:

> *ὦ δυστυχεῖς μὲν πολλά, παῦρα δ' ὄλβιοι*
> *βροτοί, τί σεμνύνεσθε ταῖς ἐξουσίαις,*
> *ἃς ἔν τ' ἔδωκε φέγγος ἔν τ' ἀφείλετο;*
> *ἦν δ' εὐτυχῆτε, μηδὲν ὄντες εὐθέως*
> *ἴσ' οὐρανῷ φρονεῖτε....*

That passage contains many of the themes which are used in this play by Sophocles. There is the contrast between good luck and happiness, the arrogance and the instability of power, the nothingness of men, the pride which makes men count themselves equal with the gods.

442. Good Luck is not Happiness. Oedipus, the man of Luck, is ruined by his own success. For his skill in answering the Sphinx gave him the fatal throne. That is the most important significance of this reply, though it is true that the prophet rather spitefully suggests that it was luck rather than skill (for this combination, *cf.* Hdt. 1 68 *καὶ συντυχίῃ χρησάμενος καὶ σοφίῃ*) which helped Oedipus to solve a problem, by which he himself had been baffled. This theme of Luck runs through the whole play. See 52, 80, and especially 977, 1080, 1526. For the contrast between luck and *φρόνησις cf.* Eupolis (Πόλεις, Kock Vol. 1 p. 314. fr. 205) *ὦ πόλις, πόλις* (*cf. O.T.* 629) *ὡς εὐτυχὴς εἶ μᾶλλον ἢ καλῶς φρονεῖς.*

443. A good example of the lofty moral freedom with which Sophocles treats the old themes. Oedipus uses these words 'I care not,' in a spirit of the noblest generosity. His generosity moves us the more because his words have the fatal ring of the recklessness which, to a Greek, is a signal of approaching calamity. At this point the climax is reached. There is a pause. Then Teiresias speaks very quietly. Oedipus answers with an effort to appear unmoved, followed by a return of scorn which is expressed with far less vigour and conviction than his earlier denunciation. Notice how different 445–446 are from 429–431. But before he goes the prophet turns back to deliver the message of denunciation with which, as he now feels, he was sent by the god.

453–456. Each point is important. The intellectual pride of this scene is symbolised by the light of the eyes which is to be put out. For wealth and a kingship, claiming, as the scene with Creon will show, not merely to *share*, but to *possess* the city of Thebes, there shall be given the life of a vagrant beggar in foreign lands. I mention this point because the importance of the theme of wealth and poverty has been missed, with disastrous results for the interpretation of 889 and 1513. That the ancient world appreciated the importance of this element in the play could be shown by many quotations. I will mention here only one anecdote. It is related by Arrian (Stob. *Ecl.* 4 c. XXXIII 28, Gaisford; Meineke *Floril.* c. XCVII) that Socrates was invited to become a wealthy courtier by king Archelaus. His answer was a combination of the theme of Sufficiency (see line 1513) with the remark that the voice of Polus, the great actor, was 'no more melodious in the role of Oedipus Tyrannus than in that of the vagrant beggar of Colonus.' The scene which we have just witnessed has displayed the pride and the blindness of human intellect: the scene which is to follow will show the pride of riches and power, blinding the King to the worth of his loyal friend who preaches in vain the doctrine

of the modest mean. Both scenes are vital, not only for the mechanical plot, but for the moral significance of the drama.

462. The last words are not simply an expression of professional spite and triumph. As I have tried to show the theme of φρόνησις is the keynote of the whole scene. See note on 403.

A writer in the *Classical Review*, Vol. XXVII p. 37 Feb. 1913, has revived a suggestion that Oedipus retires at the beginning of Teiresias' last speech. In the Cambridge performance 'The speech of Teiresias at 447 revealed so much that it seemed incredible that Oedipus should quietly retire at 462 without opening his lips. Surely even if he remained deaf to the broad hints of the prophet, he could not have passed over such a speech without an angry retort.' It must be remembered that even Mr Scott, the admirable Cambridge Oedipus, was not Polus and even our critical audience were not Athenians. What we tried, apparently unsuccessfully, to suggest was this: Oedipus at the end is filled with vague forebodings, not, indeed, because he suspects the whole truth (see my note on 415) but because the last words of Teiresias have stirred in him the memories of that fear which has haunted him since first he left the presence of Apollo at Delphi. The audience see only that he is deeply moved, too deeply moved to answer. They know that he has heard these prophecies before. The chorus realise nothing but the accusation of the murder of the King. The emotion and the silence of Oedipus here bear fruit in the scene with Jocasta. But neither here nor in that scene is the clue provided which can make the King realise that the crime with which he is now charged is actually the fulfilment of the horrible fate foretold to him, not for the first time, in lines 457 ff.

463. The MSS evidence (L ἤδε? corrected to εἶπε, Γ εἶδε corrected to εἶπε) seems to me somewhat to favour εἶδε. The scholiast knows both readings.

463 ff. Teiresias has just denounced Oedipus. Why do not the chorus at once express their horror? This song contains, as Jebb remarks, their reflections first upon the oracle of Apollo, secondly upon the denunciation of Teiresias. The formal arrangement corresponds to the order of the events witnessed since 215. But I venture to suggest that this is not a complete explanation. The chorus go back to the problem set by Apollo, not because they are unmoved by the last speeches of Teiresias, but because they have not understood them. The effect of what they have heard is shown in the emotional phrase ἄρρητ' ἀρρήτων, which is truer than they can realise. They are, indeed, vaguely horrified by the dreadful words they have just heard: but their inability to understand naturally makes them more ready to assume that the prophet is mistaken in what they suppose to be the main, the only intelligible, point, the accusation of murder. I think therefore, that,

without insisting too much on the formal convention, we can claim that the audience is unlikely to feel the difficulty felt by Jebb. For the audience, of course, there is this great advantage in the arrangement. They have understood Teiresias, and they already feel that Oedipus is hotly beset by his pursuing fate.

469. The effect of this line is heightened for the audience by the fact that they have heard the victim himself speak of Laïus as one on whose head 'Fortune has leapt' (263). Fortune, which leapt on Laïus, is to ruin Oedipus, as we were reminded at 442. We shall hear again of this fatal leaping.

470. Apollo himself pursues his victim, armed with fire and lightning. I remarked on line 27 that the metaphor of a destructive fire would be developed in the sequel. In the first chorus the plague is again treated as a raging fire, and the gods who are invoked against it are implored to bring purifying flames to fight the flame. The thunderbolt of Zeus, the torches of Artemis and of Bacchus will be remembered. I pointed out at line 205 the omission of fire from the equipment of Apollo. The god of Light and Purification comes with *arrows* against the plague. His *fires* are reserved for a more tragic use. Had the poet armed him with fire in the first chorus, we should not have been thrilled as now, without knowing why, we *are* thrilled, by the fire and the lightning with which he leaps on Oedipus! Nor is it an accident that the same metaphor is continued in 474. The oracle is a flame: it flashes from Parnassus: it is alive, and tracks the sinner.

478. I had already decided to accept, as idiomatic, the reading of the first hand of L, *πεταῖος ὁ ταῦρος*, but Mr A. C. Pearson's admirable note in *C. Q.* Vol XIII 1919, p. 119, makes this reading certain.

481. The oracles of this metaphor which fly, like Kêres, like the gadfly, about the distracted quarry of the god, may serve to illustrate the kind of use which Sophocles makes of his chorus. In the dialogue the surface of the sentences is severe, unmetaphorical, never loaded with ornament. Yet, as we know, in sentence after sentence every word is fraught with tragic ambiguities and ironies. The effect of the chorus upon our understanding of the dialogue is this: though the speakers speak as men, revealing their own minds and characters, never unnaturally, never bombastically or prettily, for us the air they breathe and the words they speak are full of the invisible arrows, stings, and flames, of the gods.

499. Heracleitus (Diels 32 p. 67) is giving a new turn to the same commonplace when he says *ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι ἐθέλει καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα* (cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 160).

500. This is in no way impious. Cf. Aesch. *fr.* 391 *ἁμαρτάνει τι καὶ σοφοῦ σοφώτερος* and (with Campbell) Pindar *Paean* fr. 61. The

most religious must admit that prophets sometimes err. The chorus are not only loyal, but prudent in refusing, even on the word of a great prophet, to believe an accusation which is not proved. In Aesch. *Ag.* 186 *μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων* implies reproach.

505. For the importance of *ὀρθόν* in this play see 87 note and *cf.* 853, 1221.

The vivid phrase *πρὶν ἴδοιμ' ὀρθὸν ἔπος* refers to a greater word and a more terrible sight than the chorus realise. For the moment, however, notice that *ἔπος* here is recalled by *ἔπη* in 513.

508. The emotional value is heightened by the choice of phrase. When the 'winged maiden' came upon him, Oedipus in the test and trial proved wise and earned the love of the city which he served. In this later trial—as we know, but the chorus do not know—when Fortune and Apollo leap upon him, with the winged Kêres and the flying oracles, the test proves him blind in spite of wisdom, a bad citizen in spite of his love for Thebes. The scene which we have just witnessed has shown how Oedipus lacks *φρόνησις*. The scene of tyrannical injustice to Creon is also a necessary part of the moral development: for the audience *σοφός* looks back and *ἀδύπολις* hints at the scene which is to come. Finally the loyalty of the chorus, expressed in the last four lines, is sharply contrasted with the unjust suspicion of Oedipus, by the dramatic entry of Creon, whose *ἔπη* recalls *ἔπος* and whose *κακὸς* (520–521) recalls *κακίαν*. Presently the title *κακός* will be given to Oedipus, not by Teiresias, in spite of 334, not by Creon, in spite of 627, but by himself (1421). Observe the skill of the poet. Have you ever noticed the use of *ἔπος* in 525, and then wondered why the word *ἔπος* seemed so natural at 1419? The dramatist, of course, did not intend us to notice it: but, whether the word was chosen at all these places by conscious art or by happy instinct, the choice is right. It is surprising that any editor has been found who could read *τοῦ πρός*....

513. The scene which is to display the hero, not as a Tyrant, but as an heroic King driven by blind suspicion to the verge of tyranny, begins significantly with the words *ἄνδρες πολῖται*. See my remarks on the opening scene of Aesch. *Sept.* in the note on line 1.

514. *τύραννον* means for Creon 'Monarch': but the context of suspicion inevitably makes an audience feel the contrast between *πολῖται* and *τύραννον*.

525. See note on 508, refer also, as Jebb directs, to 848, and you will see that in this play the central theme, the leaping into light of a fatal secret, influences the smallest phrase. Words are not simply 'uttered' in this astonishing and tragic life: they 'come out,' they

spring to light.' *ταῖς ἐμαῖς γνώμαις* rhetorically echoes, and protests against, the excuse of 524.

530. The refusal of the chorus to criticise 'our masters' is really a tactful attempt to preserve loyalty both to Oedipus and to Creon. But it has for the audience a further dramatic point. It gives to Oedipus the name of Master, and reminds us of the perilous temptation which such power involves, just at the moment when the King comes to meet the test of his royalty. Isocrates (*πρὸς Νικοκλέα* 15 c) observes that one of the disadvantages under which tyrants labour is that *ἀνουθέτητοι διατελοῦσι*.

533. *τὰς ἐμὰς στέγας* reminds us of 434. Oedipus has unwittingly committed precisely the acts of which he accuses Creon. He has had the 'effrontery' to enter the house of the man whom he has slain, and whose crown he has unwittingly stolen. On the ground of a bare suspicion of a guilty intention Oedipus speaks as if Creon stood convicted of the guilty act.

541–542. Not thus did Oedipus himself acquire his throne, but, as a good King, by good service. The doctrine that numbers and money, *i.e.*, bribery and the support that bribery can win, are the sources of royal power, is the Tyrant's creed. Suspicion of Creon makes Oedipus speak as if it were his own. It is characteristic of the Tyrant to cut off eminent citizens. Aristotle observes that the proverbial association of such conduct with tyrants is not altogether fair, since even democracies, by ostracism, get rid of 'those who seem to predominate too much through their wealth or the number of their friends' (*Pol.* Γ 13 15–18 1284 a). This implies the proverbial connection with tyranny. Cf. Soph. *fr.* 85 *τὰ χρήματ' ἀνθρώποισιν εὑρίσκει φίλους, | αὖθις δὲ (?) τιμάς, εἶτα τῆς ὑπερτάτης | τυραννίδος θακοῦσιν ἀγχίστην (?) ἕδραν*. Money is the motive which persuades men to assist a tyrant to his place, as it is the motive which makes men plot against him. See note on 380, and *cf.* Theogn. 823 *μήτε τιν' αὔξε τύραννον ἐπ' ἐλπίδι, κέρδεσιν εἴκων, | μήτε κτεῖνε....* It was thus that Peisistratus recovered his tyrannis, with the aid of Lygdamis who supplied *καὶ χρήματα καὶ ἄνδρας* (Hdt. 1 61).

544. For the claim to equal speech see line 408. Notice the different tone of Creon. Teiresias in claiming equal speech implied that Oedipus was a tyrant. Creon, who is reasonable and persuasive, reminds him of the wise and generous policy. The last three words represent a formula very popular in ancient wisdom. Thus, among the maxims attributed to the Seven Wise Men we find *γνῶθι μαθών, ἀκούσας νόει* (Mullach Vol. 1 p. 217): Bias said *νόει καὶ τότε πράττε* (Mullach Vol. 1 p. 215), Thales *δίδασκε καὶ μάνθανε τὸ ἄμεινον* (Diels p. 522 l. 6). *Cf.* [Pythag.] *Aureum Carm.* (Mullach Vol. 1 p. 194 l. 30) *πρῆσσε δὲ μηδὲν τῶν μὴ ἐπίστασαι, ἀλλὰ διδάσκευ | ὅσσα χρεών*.

543–582. Creon now knows that Oedipus suspects him of an attempt to seize the throne, but does not know on what grounds he is suspected. He knows, of course, that the suspicion is false. In his patient effort to free the King from illusion, he must first induce a frame of mind which will make Oedipus consent to listen. The first attempt, based on the appeal to fairness and *φρόνησις*, fails. At 554 a second attempt begins with the request that Oedipus should at least state the ground of his suspicion. Oedipus in the second stage of the dialogue (555–573) attempts to convict Creon by eliciting an admission that the prophet is a liar. By prudent answers Creon elicits from Oedipus the statement of 573. That point marks a second definite stage in the dialogue. Having wisely waited until the king has expressly charged him with a definite act of treachery, Creon proceeds to try to prove his innocence by showing that he has no motive for disloyalty. 574–582 thus mark a third stage. The main interest for the audience is in the temper of Oedipus. In the first stage his delusion is contrasted with the good sense of Creon whom he charges with the lack of *φρόνησις*: this is a repetition of the main *motif* of the Teiresias scene. In the second stage the refusal of Creon to speak without knowledge is contrasted with the rash assumptions of Oedipus, the wise man who prides himself on leaving no clue unconsidered. Of the third stage I speak below. In acting, a pause should be made after the important lines 542, 554, 573.

548. See note on 508.

558. Oedipus pauses to think before he speaks of Laïus as murdered. He suspects Creon of having arranged the 'disappearance,' and therefore, like an accusing counsel, chooses his words. Creon, it is to be observed, does not know that Oedipus has been accused of this murder (574). He has only heard that the King, for some reason, suspects Teiresias of lying, and himself of instigating Teiresias to lie. His interruption may well seem to Oedipus like the attempt of a guilty man to appear stupid. To the audience it shows how far he is from understanding why Oedipus suspects him of treachery.

576–582. The question of 576, which Oedipus scornfully answers, thinking it irrelevant, is the preliminary to 581. Creon is trying to show how little he has to gain by disloyalty. The argument chosen by Sophocles for this purpose has, however, a further dramatic value. Good Kings proverbially share their power, bad Kings will not brook any partnership. The audience are reminded that Oedipus has hitherto ruled as a good King, not as a Tyrant. Before the scene ends he will show that he is being driven by his suspicions to make the Tyrant's claim to sole authority. Achilles, who said to Phoenix *ἶσον ἐμοὶ βασίλευε, καὶ ἥμισυ μείρεο τιμῆς* (*Il.* IX 616) (a passage recalled by Aristotle *Pol.* Γ′ 16 12 1287 b), provides

the text for those who praise this characteristic of the good King, just as the temper of which he is accused by Agamemnon (*Il.* I 287), *ἐθέλει περὶ πάντων ἔμμεναι ἄλλων, | πάντων μὲν κρατέειν ἐθέλει, πάντεσσι δ' ἀνάσσειν*, becomes the stock attitude for the Tyrant. Agamemnon himself in his time of delusion, when, like Oedipus he cannot *νοῆσαι ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω*, informs Achilles that he will seize Briseis *ὄφρ' εὖ εἰδῇς | ὅσσον φέρτερός εἰμι σέθεν, στυγέῃ δὲ καὶ ἄλλος | ἶσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθήμεναι ἄντην*. The excellent King of Eur. *Suppliants* has followed the doctrine of Achilles to its logical conclusion, and taken the whole state into democratic partnership. He delivers a magnificent tirade against tyranny (431 ff.) under which one single man usurps the place of the law and so violates the sacred right of *ἰσότης*. I shall have more to say on this topic later. For the moment it is enough to remark that whereas for us this little preface to Creon's harangue may seem to make the performance drag, for an Athenian audience, who realise the nature of this second trial of Oedipus, all the preliminary fencing has been merely the preface to this moment when the vital point begins to emerge. Oedipus, at this moment, stands admittedly for a good King who does not grudge good men a share in his power.

583. The whole speech is dramatically an appeal for *φρόνησις*, not merely an ingenious defence. Creon is to Oedipus as Solon was to Croesus, and Croesus, when he had learnt wisdom by suffering, to Cyrus and Cambyses. Before the fall of pride there is always found some wise counsellor of moderation.

This line, therefore, has a higher moral significance than is implied, for instance, by Prof. Murray's: 'Do but follow me and scan | Thine own charge close.' It means: 'Not so, if you will hearken to the voice of reason instead of to the voice of passion.' Creon is, indeed, a little priggish: but he is a preacher, trying to save Oedipus from a dangerous mood. A good ruler, according to [Democritus] (Diels 302 p. 445) and all sound Greek ideas, should have *πρὸς μὲν τοὺς καιροὺς λογισμόν, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἐναντίους τόλμαν, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους εὔνοιαν*. For *διδοίης σαυτῷ λόγον* in this sense cf. Hdt. II 162, III 45.

585–586. The good King, as we have already noticed (see line 65 n.), wakes in order to watch over his people's interests. The Tyrant cannot sleep because he fears for his crown. The mention here of the fears which accompany the royal power is thus relevant to the spiritual drama. Oedipus suspects Creon because, although he is a good King, he is not exempt from the tendency to suspicion which is characteristic of the bad King. The notion that the bad King lives in constant fear is, as H. Gomperz remarks, the 'Grundton' of all the later representations of the tyrant (Dio Chrys. VI §38, Plato *Rep.* IX 579 E). If a tyrant can say

oderint dum metuant, a wise Greek will prefer to follow the advice of [Democritus] (Diels 302 p. 445) *ποθητὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ φοβερὸς κατὰ τὸν βίον προαιροῦ· ὃν γὰρ πάντες φοβοῦνται, πάντας φοβεῖται.*

589. This line ought, in itself, to have shown the critics the dramatic importance of the speech. As Jebb remarks, the natural sequence would be *οὔτ' αὐτὸς...οὔτ' ἄλλῳ παραινοῖμ' ἄν*. By substituting the nominative construction the poet makes more vivid the appeal for a 'sound mind' which Creon is really addressing to Oedipus. *σωφρονεῖν* means *εὖ φρονεῖν*, and we have already learnt the importance of the theme.

595. Jebb gives *κέρδει* too narrow a sense, and so makes the whole passage sound frigid and calculating. 'Honours which bring substantial advantages—real power and personal comfort—as opposed to honours in which outward splendour is joined to heavier care' are indeed the actual rewards of Creon's moderation: but the general phrase in which he sums up his ambitions has a much higher application. All men seek 'gain,' or what they conceive to be 'for their advantage.' Only the right-minded seek their gain from 'that which really profits.' The wise Bias, when he was asked in what pursuit all men delight, replied, 'In the pursuit of gain' (Diog. L. 1 87), and the wise Periander bade men 'do nothing for the sake of money, since we should seek for our gains those gains that really profit *τὰ κερδαντὰ κερδαίνειν* (Diog. L. 1 97). An evil gain, said the same sage, is a treasure of sorrow (Stob. *Ecl.* 3 c. x 48 (10. 49 Meineke)). With this proverbial philosophy in mind, refer again to line 316 of our play. Teiresias, at the outset, speaks of 'wisdom that profits not,' and thereby sounds the dominant note of his encounter with the man of human wisdom. Creon speaks here of 'gains that really profit,' in the scene which reminds us that the wealth and power of a King profit him not without wisdom. As Democritus wrote (Diels 189 p. 420) *ἄριστον ἀνθρώπῳ τὸν βίον διάγειν ὡς πλεῖστα εὐθυμηθέντι καὶ ὡς ἐλάχιστα ἀνιηθέντι· τοῦτο δ' ἂν εἴη εἴ τις μὴ ἐπὶ τοῖς θνητοῖσι τὰς ἡδονὰς ποιοῖτο* and (40 p. 399) *οὔτε σώμασι οὔτε χρήμασι εὐδαιμονοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι, ἀλλ' ὀρθοσύνῃ καὶ πολυφροσύνῃ*. Cf. Theognis 197 ff.

596. A normal answer to the greeting *χαῖρε* seems to have been *χαίρω*. See Aesch. *Ag.* 544 Headlam, and *cf.* Eur. *Hec.* 426. This fact, and the memory of the phrase *χαῖρέ μοι*, make it possible for Sophocles, without the ambiguity with which he is charged by some modern critics, to invent the phrase of the text. The meaning is: 'all men greet me and wish me well.'

600. Those who have the curiosity to consult Jebb's note will find a good instance of the confusion into which the best of critics may fall if they ignore the relevance of this moralising to Oedipus.

609. The plea for justice is unavailing. Oedipus persists in his suspicion, and acts upon it, though the way of certain proof has been offered

in lines 603 ff. It is worth while to notice that, just as the recurrent κακός of this scene is recalled in 1421, so the theme of Justice is recalled in 1420.

609–610. Theognis combines the doctrine of the Measure, so important for our play, with the superstition that the gods cheat men to their ruin, making good seem evil and evil good (401–406). This is the 'famous word revealed' of ancient wisdom which is translated into lyric in *Antig.* 621. The notion that the knowledge of good and evil is withheld from all men, and particularly from the wicked or ill-fated, is very familiar, and is not necessarily combined with the superstitious belief in the divine malevolence. See *e.g.* Solon 13 l. 65, Theog. 585 ff., 133 ff. Kings, in particular, since the loyalty of their subjects is their most precious possession and a surer defence than weapons and a bodyguard (Dio Chrys. III § 86 foll.), need the power of discrimination between the good and the bad. A fine dramatic use of this idea is made in Aesch. *Ag.* 807. The chorus warns the triumphant King of the importance of such discrimination. The words hint at danger from Clytaemnestra, and Agamemnon's reply, as Headlam remarks, shows that he understands. Yet he is duped in the sequel by the flattery of the queen, and so enticed by her into sin and ruin. The dramatic value of such touches depends upon the familiarity of the ideas. When Pindar warns his royal patrons against false friends, and commends himself for a frank loyalty that dares to speak unpleasant truth, he is playing upon the same commonplace as the chorus of Aeschylus. In our play Creon is the friend who uses loyal candour. But the King has lost his power of distinguishing friend from foe.

It should be added that in the systematic development of the Tyrant's character a more sinister trait emerged. It was denied that a Tyrant failed to make the important distinction, and it was suggested that his hatred of the good and his favours to the evil were the result of a deliberate policy. Eur. *Ion* 627 ὦ τοὺς πονηροὺς ἡδονῇ φίλους ἔχειν, | ἐσθλοὺς δὲ μισεῖ κατθανεῖν φοβούμενος. Xen. *Hiero* v 1: 'They know as well as ordinary men who is brave and wise and just: but instead of respecting such persons, they fear them....' How important this kind of thing is for the interpretation of our play may be gathered from statements like this of Aristotle (*Pol.* H′ (E′) 11 15 1314 a): '<Tyrants> are at enmity with men of sense and moderation (τοῖς ἐπιεικέσι),' among other reasons 'because such men are loyal to themselves and to others and do not make accusations either against themselves or against others.' Add the maxim ascribed to Pittacus (Mullach Vol. 1 p. 216) τὸν φίλον κακῶς μὴ λέγε μηδὲ τὸν ἐχθρὸν φίλον ἡγοῦ.

611–612. It is to this proverb that Polydeuces appeals when he prays that he may die with his brother Castor (Pindar *Nem.* x 78):

οἴχεται τιμὰ φίλων τατωμένῳ | φωτί· παῦροι δ' ἐν πόνῳ πιστοὶ βροτῶν | καμάτου μεταλαμβάνειν.

613–615. The strength of this conclusion will not be apparent to hearers who are not aware how familiar is the connection of ἀσφάλεια (613) with εὐλάβεια (see 616–617 below): and also how important in Greek moralising poetry is this doctrine that Time is the one revealer of all truth. See Pindar *Ol.* I 33 ff., II 15 ff., X 7, 53, *Nem.* IV 41 ff. The tragic significance of line 616 is obvious: notice that here again we have the combination δίκαιος)(κακός which we heard at 609, and which I then suggested is recalled in its full significance at 1420–1421. Thales said 'Time is the clearest and truest test σαφέστατος ἔλεγχος of all things: for it is Time that brings the truth to light' (Stob. *Ecl.* I c. VIII 40). 'Time is the parent and the judge of all things' (*Tr. Fr.* N. p. xxi 9, xxiii 34). Though Time (*O.C.* 609, *Ai.* 656) and Change consume all things save the gods, yet, from Pindar to our own day (Pind. *fr.* 159 ἀνδρῶν δικαίων χρόνος σωτὴρ ἄριστος) it is a common notion that the best things tend to survive. Demosthenes ὑπὲρ Φορμίωνος p. 953 'Time the best test for refuting liars.' It is useless to conceal the truth, for Time, 'who sees all, hears all,' unfolds all (Soph. *fr.* 280, *cf. O.C.* 1448 ff.). It is Time, says Euripides (*fr.* 60), that can teach the signs by which a good man and a bad can be known. In another sense also, Time is the great Teacher (Aesch. *P.V.* 955, Eur. *fr.* 291). [Lucian] *Amores* p. 435 'schoolmaster Time.' This truth, also, we must not forget, since much in this play depends on our realisation that a good man (Maximus *Serm.* περὶ φρονήσεως, Mullach Vol. I p. 229 11) should always 'remember that which has already been, perform in act those things that are now at hand, and, about that which is still to come, be cautious (ἀσφαλίζεσθαι).'

The particular turn which is given to the commonplace here is rightly explained by Hermann. See Ar. *Eccl.* 177 quoted by Blaydes. But the second line is not, as Jebb says, 'prompted' by 'the Greek love of antithesis' and 'relevant to Creon's point only as implying, "if I had been a traitor, you would probably have seen some symptom of it ere now."' That is what Creon means, no doubt. The effect for the audience is relevant, not to Creon, but to Oedipus himself. Have we forgotten the words of Teiresias (448)? One little day of glory, then.... I hope I may be acquitted of the apparent irrelevance, if I recall that Solon's ambitious friends (Solon *fr.* 33 Bgk) would have accepted 'a single day of royalty' at the price of ruin (ἐπιτέτριφθαι *cf.* 428) for themselves and their whole families.

616–617. The chorus express what the audience have felt throughout the speech. If we regard the speech simply as Creon's 'defence "from

probabilities,"' it is, no doubt, possible to say that the scene flags. To the audience, not merely because they like argument and rhetoric (though they do like them), still less because they remember that an 'Agon' is part of the ritual (whether or not an Agon really *was* a part of an alleged Dukduk-Dionysia), but chiefly because they care about the moral situation, every word has been tragically relevant.

For Eulabeia, the only sure defence against evil, and for its connection with the doctrine of Due Measure, or Sophrosyne, see by all means Headlam's note on Aesch. *Ag.* 995ff. Of course, however cautious Oedipus had been, however much he had relied for safety on his own moderation and the loyalty of his true friend, the harm was already really done, the sequel could still only have been calamity. But Sophocles uses the emotions which the old doctrine stirs, to heighten the tragedy of his hero.. Oedipus behaves to Creon as a man whom pride of power and suspicion of possible rivals have deprived of *moral* 'Caution.' A Tyrant's idea of caution is like that of the rival parties in the Corcyraean revolution (Thuc. III 82 5): *ἐπιβουλεύσας δέ τις τυχὼν ξυνετός, καὶ ὑπονοήσας ἔτι δεινότερος...ἁπλῶς δὲ ὁ φθάσας τὸν μέλλοντα κακόν τι δρᾶν ἐπῃνεῖτο...*, (83 2) *μὴ παθεῖν μᾶλλον προεσκόπουν ἢ πιστεῦσαι ἐδύναντο.* May I anticipate the sequel by reminding you that these persons, also, like Oedipus, could not trust even an oath (83 2), *οὐ γὰρ ἦν ὁ διαλύσων οὔτε λόγος ἐχυρὸς οὔτε ὅρκος φοβερός?* But of course, Oedipus is not, like such persons, himself prepared to be forsworn. Finally notice the cause of all this kind of thing: 'ambition and the desire for gain' (82 8). The relevance of l. 889 could not have seemed doubtful to a Greek audience.

617. 'Slow and sure' says an English proverb, and the Greeks had many proverbs expressing that kind of notion: *ἐπισφαλὲς προπέτεια: ἡ γλῶσσά σου μὴ προτρεχέτω τοῦ νοῦ: μίσει τὸ ταχὺ λαλεῖν, μὴ ἁμάρτῃς· μετάνοια γὰρ ἀκολουθεῖ: μὴ σπεῦδε λαλῶν: γνῶθι μαθών, ἀκούσας νόει: βουλεύου χρόνῳ, ἐπιτέλει συντόμως: νόει καὶ τότε πράττε.* See Mullach Vol. I p. 212ff. Theognis 633–634 *βουλεύου δὶς καὶ τρίς, ὅ τοί κ' ἐπὶ τὸν νόον ἔλθῃ· | ἀτηρὸς γάρ τοι λάβρος ἀνὴρ τελέθει*, Democritus (60 p. 401) *προβουλεύεσθαι κρεῖσσον πρὸ τῶν πράξεων ἢ μετανοεῖν*, [Pythag.] *Aureum Carm.* (Mullach Vol. I p. 195 l. 39) *λόγισαι δὲ πρὸ ἔργου*, (l. 27) *βουλεύου δὲ πρὸ ἔργου, ὅπως μὴ μῶρα πέλῃται.* So Cambyses confesses (Hdt. III 65) *δείσας δὲ μὴ ἀπαιρεθέω τὴν ἀρχὴν πρὸς τοῦ ἀδελφεοῦ, ἐποίησα ταχύτερα ἢ σοφώτερα.* On ll. 345–346 we recalled the commonplace, used by Diodotus before the assembly, that Anger and Hurry are the two things most inimical to sound judgment. Thuc. v 70 shows, in a small incident, how deeply this notion has sunk into the Greek mind. An assembly meets: the Argives and the rest come *ἐντόνως καὶ ὀργῇ*

χωροῦντες, but the Spartans βραδέως. Of course the Spartans prevail. How important is the application of this commonplace in the larger scheme of Thucydides—it is, in fact, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, true, and therefore applicable to the facts of a true history—we begin to realise when we read of the fall of Themistocles, the typical Athenian (Thuc. I 138) who, like Oedipus, οἰκείᾳ συνέσει καὶ οὔτε προμαθὼν ἐς αὐτὴν οὐδὲν οὔτε ἐπιμαθών, (*cf. O.T.* 397 ff.), was τῶν τε παραχρῆμα δι' ἐλαχίστης βουλῆς κράτιστος γνώμων, καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἄριστος εἰκαστής. Pausanias, in his pride, τῇ ὀργῇ οὕτω χαλεπῇ ἐχρήσατο ὥστε μηδένα δύνασθαι προσιέναι (I 130). The ephors, however, though they were his enemies, behaved like true Spartans, whose habit is μὴ ταχεῖς εἶναι περὶ ἀνδρὸς Σπαρτιάτου ἄνευ ἀναμφισβητήτων τεκμηρίων βουλεῦσαί τι ἀνήκεστον (I 132). Thucydides makes a rational use of the language of commonplace morality. The episode of Pausanias is, artistically, a preface to the application of the same formulae to the contrast and the struggle between the Athenian quickness of intelligence, and also of passion, and the slow Spartan caution.

The quickness and the anger are combined *e.g.* in Eur. *fr.* 31 ὀργῇ γὰρ ὅστις εὐθέως χαρίζεται κακῶς τελευτᾷ and in Eur. *fr.* 1032 τὸ δ' ὠκὺ τοῦτο καὶ τὸ λαιψηρὸν φρενῶν....

618–621. For the idea *cf.* Thuc. III 12 3, and the passages quoted above 616–617 n. For the dramatic use of ὅταν—the generalised subordinate clause, suddenly transformed into the particularised and vivid main clause with ἐμὲ—see my article in *C.R.* Vol. XXVII Sept 1913 p. 185.

623. Creon expects, at the worst, to be banished. The reply of the King is dictated by anger, not by judgment, and is later ignored by Creon. For the moment Oedipus is represented as having taken one more step in the Tyrant's path. The good maxim is κόλαζε κρίνων, ἀλλὰ μὴ θυμούμενος (Demonax *fr.* 2, N. p. 827). Notice, however, that Oedipus does not here pronounce sentence. He only says βούλομαι. Those who follow Triclinius in asserting at l. 641 that 'Creon lies,' have missed this point. Quite naturally at 641 Creon spares Jocasta and himself by saying nothing of the King's hasty declaration, and implying that he makes allowance for the King's lack of self-control.

624–625. I venture, in spite of Jebb's Appendix, to transpose these lines. If they are printed as they appear in the MSS the best that can be done with them seems to be to adopt Jebb's ὡς ἄν, to give l. 624 to Oedipus, l. 625 to Creon, and to suppose that a line has fallen out. But all this is very difficult. The 'jerkiness' to which Jebb objects would be entirely removed if we could read φρονεῖν for φθονεῖν. (The maxim of Cheilon (Mullach Vol. I p. 216), which appears as μὴ φθόνει θνητά, should

be either *μὴ φρόνει θνητά* (*cf.* Plut. *Mor.* 152 B) or *μὴ φθόνει· <φρόνει> θνητά*, as W. Headlam saw.) *φρονεῖν* must have occurred to many scholars, but has probably been rejected on metrical grounds. But in Aesch. *Pers.* 782 *νέος ἐὼν νέα φρονεῖ* is probably right. Unfortunately the Ionic colouring of the whole play diminishes the cogency of this example. I am inclined to think that in Aesch. *fr.* 399 *τὸ γὰρ βρότειον σπέρμ' ἐφήμερα φρονεῖ, | καὶ πιστὸν οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἢ καπνοῦ σκιά*, we have a genuine instance of the lengthening of *α* before this verb. If we retain *φθονεῖν* we must suppose that Creon catches at the similarity between the two verbs. *σ'* is stressed: *cf.* 329, 332, 642.

626–627. The assertion by Oedipus that it is for his own interest that he thinks, shows how far he has moved from the spirit of line 64, or line 93. The reply of Creon drives home to the audience the contrast between the spirit of the stock good King and the spirit now displayed by Oedipus. That the Tyrant considers his own interest or 'gain' is proverbial. See Introduction, p. xlix. Important passages are Thuc. I 17 *τὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν μόνον προορώμενοι*, Aristotle *Pol.* Z' (Δ') 10 4 1295 a *πρὸς τὸ σφέτερον αὐτῆς συμφέρον*, *Eth. Nic.* Θ' 12 2 1160 b. Of course, as Plato suggests, all governments tend to do this, *Rep.* 338 E, cf. 341 A (*Laws* 714 C, D), but it is especially the bad King who acts on this theory, since Athens is democratic and suspicious of all Kings, even of the good. Critics of the Demos say that it has all the characteristics of a Tyrant. See *e.g.* Eur. *Sup.* 412.

A good parallel to this exciting climax will be found in Eur. *Hel.* 1630 ff. *φρονῶ γὰρ εὖ*, says the angry monarch who is about to behave tyrannically: and the moderating influence replies *οὐκ ἔμοιγε*.... Again at 1638 the monarch complains *ἀρχόμεσθ' ἄρ', οὐ κρατοῦμεν* and receives the answer, *ὅσια δρᾶν, τὰ δ' ἔκδικ' οὔ*.

The parallel with *Antigone* 736 ff. is obvious: KP. *ἄλλῳ γὰρ ἢ 'μοὶ χρή με τῆσδ' ἄρχειν χθονός;* AIM. *πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔσθ' ἥτις ἀνδρός ἐσθ' ἑνός.* KP. *οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἡ πόλις νομίζεται;* AIM. *καλῶς ἐρήμης γ' ἂν σὺ γῆς ἄρχοις μόνος* (*cf. O. T.* 54–58). The *motif* of *φρόνησις* also appears, but is modified by the fact that a son is abusing his father (*Ant.* 727, 755).

628. The proverbial wisdom which we must here remember is expressed in such maxims as *μὴ πρότερον βασιλεύειν ἐπιχειρεῖν πρὶν ἢ φρονῆσαι* (Dio IV § 70), *μὴ ἄρχειν ἀνόητον ὄντα* (Plut. *Mor.* 100 A), *ἄρχων κόσμει σεαυτόν* (Thales, Diels p. 522 l. 9, Mullach Vol. I p. 213), *δεῖ τὸν ἑτέρων μέλλοντα ἄρξειν, αὐτὸν ἑαυτοῦ πρῶτον ἄρχειν* ([Democritus], Diels 302 p. 445).

629. That Oedipus, at the very moment of his claim to be above the limitations of a lawful King, appeals to the city as the source of his right, is significant. He is not a Tyrant, in spite of all. His cry gives Creon

the cue for the final reminder that, by his present conduct, Oedipus is denying the city's rights. The cry and the answer appeal alike to moral, not to physical, forces. It is a mistake to suppose that a fight between the two princes is about to take place. Still more mistaken is the supposition that each prince appeals to a faction among the citizens. It is a *στάσις γλώσσης*, not a free-fight, that demands the intervention of Jocasta. The issue is moral, and more impressive than any melodramatic brawl.

630. Creon insists upon the true meaning of the word *πόλις*. *Ant.* 737 *πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔσθ' ἥτις ἀνδρός ἐσθ' ἑνός.*

640–642. Whatever the correct reading, it is clear that Oedipus replies to *δρᾶσαι* or *δρᾶν* with his *δρῶντα*. This emphatic repetition of the word of action is not accidental. As the scene began with *δείν' ἔπη* it has come to its climax with the threat of 'terrible deeds.' See note on 508.

The repetition of *κακοῖν, κακῶς, κακῇ* makes the reply of Oedipus much more vigorous than Jebb or Murray allow it to be. *νιν* becomes emphatic as does *σ'* in l. 626.

645. The order of the words is not simply stylistic: the pause before *ὀλοίμην* corresponds to the feeling of Creon, for whom this word is a serious matter. It was found at Cambridge that the actor at first had some difficulty in expressing the emotion: the reason was that, in general, students are not able to realise how comparatively unemphatic the end of a Greek sentence tends to become. There should be a pause before 643. The oath marks an important stage in the action. Soph. *fr.* 431 *ὅρκου δὲ προστεθέντος ἐπιμελεστέρα | ψυχὴ κατέστη· δίσσα γὰρ φυλάσσεται, | φίλων τε μέμψιν κεἰς θεοὺς ἁμαρτάνειν.* Observe that these two reasons for believing that the oath is not lightly taken are recalled when, in 647–648, Jocasta appeals to Oedipus to believe.

649. This scene depends for its effect first on the moral issue involved, secondly on the formal beauty of the speech and song. Those who make the mistake of supposing that Jocasta intervenes upon a scene of melodramatic brawling, will find it difficult to avoid a sense of unreality when the chorus bursts into lyric. The clear issue of 630 is followed by a tense moment of excitement, during which neither Oedipus nor Creon nor the chorus moves at all. But Jocasta is already standing as the central figure at the palace door. Upon her rebuke, each prince makes his formal reply, a charge that the other 'does him evil.' Then come the formal oath, the appeal of Jocasta, and finally the prayer of the chorus, more excited, but not out of keeping with what has gone before.

When the formal beauty of this arrangement is preserved, we are able to appreciate what otherwise we shall miss: the place of this episode in the dramatic composition as a whole. At the outset a deputation of suppliants from the city appeared before the King, and based its appeal

on his known wisdom. At the beginning of the encounter with Teiresias the King and his people became the suppliants, begging of the wisdom of the prophet an answer which they had not the wisdom to understand. See particularly 316–329. Now the people and Jocasta are suppliants of Oedipus. But it is no longer upon his acknowledged wisdom that they rest their hope. Their prayer is now that he will consent 'to come to a sound mind.'

651. Bruhn, who remarks that *νήπιος* 'klingt wunderlich: was kommt es hier auf Torheit oder Klugheit an?' though he proceeds to admit that the word has moral associations (*El.* 145), has not realised the importance of the theme of *φρόνησις*. It is the same editor—a learned and intelligent scholar in most matters—who wrote the unhappy words: 'Keine Interpretationskunst der Welt wird aus den Worten *εἰ μὴ τὸ κέρδος κερδανεῖ δικαίως* eine Beziehung auf...Oedipus herausdeuten können: hier muss der Dichter auf etwas zielen, was gänzlich ausserhalb des Stückes liegt' [889].

655. Just as the oath was enacted with solemn formality, so is the act of supplication. And the King is bound to respect both. Therefore he warns the chorus not to compel him without realising the responsibility they undertake. At 658 he is still trying to impress upon them the same thought, and the use of *ὅταν* subtly avoids even the admission that the request has been made. See my remarks in *C. R.* Vol. XXVII Sept. 1913 p. 188.

656. I accept Bruhn's reading which is based on the fact that the scholiast read *μηδέποτ'* (MSS *μήποτ' ἐν*). L has *λόγον*, with a correction *γω*, A *λόγῳ*, Γ *λόγον*.

659. *Cf.* 100, and 309. The King assumes the disloyalty of Creon and the falseness of Teiresias. He has no room in his mind for the thought which the chorus still cherishes:—the prophet, they think, may have been mistaken.

660. The oath by the All-seeing Sun heightens once more the dramatic appeal: first Creon, then the chorus, pledge their loyalty by oaths which, if they are not true, mean ruin. 665–667 recall Jocasta's first rebuke (636). Thus this lyrical drama begins and ends with the same theme. This fact supports the reading *τάδ'* (666) not *τὰ δ'* (MSS *καὶ τάδ'*). This point Mr Murray's translation well indicates. There is a pause here.

675. *Cf.* Cleaenetus *fr.* 2 N. p. 807 *λύπη γὰρ ὀργή τ' εἰς ἕνα ψυχῆς τόπον | ἐλθόντα μανία τοῖς ἔχουσι γίγνεται.* Though Oedipus yields, he is still angry, and (Eur. *fr.* 799) *ὥσπερ θνητὸν καὶ τὸ σῶμ' ἡμῶν ἔφυ | οὕτω προσήκει μηδὲ τὴν ὀργὴν ἔχειν | ἀθάνατον ὅστις σωφρονεῖν ἐπίσταται*: cf. line 589 for the last words. So *Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 79 N. p. 854 *ἀθάνατον ὀργὴν*

μὴ φύλασσε θνητὸς ὤν. These lines contain the last and most solemn warning that Oedipus is to hear: they are not spoken with hate.

676. The restraint for which I have pleaded will bring its reward in the tragic excitement of this line. Suddenly the passion of Oedipus breaks out. When Creon, with his quiet πορεύσομαι (cf. 444) leaves the theatre, we realise that the appeal for wisdom has failed. The King is, in more than the literal sense, ἀγνῶτος. Unless we have realised throughout the scene that it is Oedipus who is on his trial, we shall fail to feel the dramatic significance of the exit of his wise counsellor. How violent is the outburst of the emotion which Oedipus has been trying in vain to control, we can gather from his silence after 676. At 687 he speaks again, but he is exhausted by the mental crisis through which he has just passed. It is the passion displayed at 676 and in the following moments that makes it possible for the chorus to speak as they do at 689.

That Jebb is right in taking ἀγνώς here also as active I do not doubt. Kugler's argument that δόκησις ἀγνὼς λόγων is practically the same as ἀφανὴς λόγος, is sound, but does not prove that ἀγνώς is passive. The λόγος is ἀφανής, *ignotum*, but the δόκησις of the ἀφανὴς λόγος, the fumbling for its meaning and validity, is *ignara*. But when Jebb says 'Oedipus was incensed against Creon without proof; on the other hand (δέ) Creon also (καί) was incensed by the unjust accusation,' I venture to think that he has overlooked Jocasta's answer ἀμφοῖν ἀπ' αὐτοῖν; to which the chorus answer ναίχι. Had they answered her next question, καὶ τίς ἦν λόγος; they would have had to explain that in the case of Oedipus there was the fumbling after an explanation of the denunciation of Teiresias, and the indignation at its apparent injustice, and in the case of Creon the fumbling after an explanation of the suspicion of Oedipus and the indignation at *its* injustice. Their ambiguous phrase covers *both* the quarrellers, in *both* its clauses. And this is what the scholiast implies.

677 ff. The word ἀγνώς is used thrice in Sophocles with active sense, and the three examples, as is not surprising, are in the *Oedipus*. In 1133 it helps the characterisation of the impertinent Corinthian with his εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι κάτοιδεν. In 677 it is used by a more violent κατάχρησις for ἀγνώμονος, as Kugler remarks: it is chosen for the sake of its suggestion to the audience of the ignorance of Oedipus. In 681 the non-committal answer of the chorus to Jocasta's question has been explained above.

687–688. I believe that Jebb's explanation is right, and that there is no excuse for rejecting the participles. The chorus, believing that both Creon and Oedipus are innocent, anxiously try to prevent further talk of the quarrel. Oedipus, convinced that Creon is his enemy, feels that the words of the chorus imply that nothing can be done to prevent Creon's

slander from spreading and leading to the banishment or death of its victim. Here the psychology of Oedipus is the same as it was in his youth (786). This point is obvious enough when the play is acted. Emendation which makes Oedipus cry *e.g.*

> So be it, thou wise counsellor! Make slight
> My wrong, and blunt my purpose ere it smite (Murray),

makes the reply of the chorus practically irrelevant. Oedipus implies by his words ὁρᾷς ἵν' ἥκεις κ.τ.λ. that, by defending Creon, the chorus have made inevitable his own condemnation. They answer the thought of the King. Notice that their appeal 'that the matter should rest where it ceased' is at this moment peculiarly tragic. It comes just before the process of revelation begins.

700. It is a small detail, yet worth noticing, that Oedipus, having dismissed the loyal Creon, turns now from the loyal citizens. Only Jocasta remains—and she is to give him fresh reasons for anxiety, instead of comfort.

718. Why did Laïus thus mutilate the child? Not from uncalculating savagery, but in order that he might not be reared if he were found on the mountains, but left to die. The mention of 'three days from the birth' curiously corresponds to the ὡς τρίτη ἡμέρη τῷ παιδίῳ ἐκκειμένῳ ἐγένετο of Hdt. I 113. This somewhat strengthens the theory of some direct connection between the Cyrus episode of Herodotus and the story of Sophocles.

719. The unusual rhythm is not certainly due to corruption, though Musgrave's ἄβατον εἰς may be right. In any case the effect of the tribrach is dramatic. Jocasta has been described as 'cold and heartless.' This view is, I believe, indefensible. When the play is acted we realise that this story of the infant whom she has lost is the story of her life's tragedy. She has never told anyone, not even Oedipus, of her secret. To-day, under stress of the longing to help and comfort her husband, she reveals, for his comfort, a secret which has oppressed her for years. Because she cares so much for him and desires above all to comfort him, she speaks coldly, turning her tragedy into an argument. But her pain emerges in the rhythm of this line. It is worth while to recall (without prejudice to the question whether Sophocles is influenced by Herodotus, or whether both are not introducing stock incidents of a familiar type of story) that the infant Cyrus was exposed (Hdt. I 110) ἐς τὸ ἐρημότατον τῶν ὀρέων, ὅκως ἂν τάχιστα διαφθαρείη. The herdsman chosen by Harpagus was one who [ἔνεμε] νομάς τε ἐπιτηδειοτάτας καὶ ὄρεα θηριωδέστατα.

725. *Cf.* line 280 and *fr.* 833.

726. The words which were intended to reassure Oedipus, bidding him disregard the prophet's accusation, have given him the first clue to

his guilt—the mention of the place at which Laïus fell. It is characteristic of Oedipus that he becomes absorbed with any idea which seizes him, and neglects for the moment every other thought. Here he has heard nothing of Jocasta's speech after l. 716. That is why the mention of the mutilation of the child passes quite unnoticed. Often in this play words are used which so plainly hint at the truth that a reader thinks it strange that Oedipus is still deceived. The explanation is seen by a spectator in the character of the king. For Oedipus, the voice of Jocasta goes on after line 716, but the words mean nothing. When the voice stops he begins to speak of the thoughts which 716 have stirred.

729. I seemed to hear you say.... This phrase confirms the opinion of the hero's psychology which I have expressed on line 726.

732 ff. Throughout this dialogue the queen is anxiously watching Oedipus, not understanding the cause of his distress, very carefully answering in exact detail his questions.

758 ff. There is an inconsistency, of no dramatic importance, between this line and 118. At 118 the audience certainly assumes that the escaped slave came home before anything had been heard of Oedipus. Here he arrives to find Oedipus on the throne. No audience would remember line 118. The object of Sophocles is, however, of dramatic importance. Jocasta, as she speaks lines 758–760, realises that the man may have had good reason for his request. There is fear in her voice at line 761. Then, with an effort, she pretends that she has seen nothing sinister. That is the explanation of lines 763–764. From this point onwards we know that she fears the coming of this man. She *thinks* that he will assert the guilt of Oedipus; after line 813 we know that she not only *fears*, but *knows* this fact. But she does not, it is important to remember, at all suspect that Oedipus is the child of whom she has spoken.

774. Of course Jocasta knows that he is supposed to be the son of Polybus. He tells his story, like a King, in the grand manner. Smaller people might say, 'My father, as you know....' It is more important for us to understand that in this speech Oedipus *is* telling Jocasta a secret which he has kept from all his friends in Thebes. Just as Jocasta has lately revealed her life's sorrow, so Oedipus now reveals a fear which has hung over him for many years. To the audience his behaviour in presence of Teiresias gave a hint of this secret fear. See note on line 462. Now, when Jocasta bids him disregard the prophet's indictment, his emotion makes him tell her that this is not the first occasion on which he has had reason to fear the truth of divination. She has appealed from the human prophet to the god himself. Oedipus fears that the prophet may be right, because the god, in whose truth he believes, has already uttered terrible prophecies of his fate. Only, again, it is important to

notice that Oedipus in no way connects the Delphic prophecy with the death of Laïus. If, as he now fears, he slew Laïus, he is polluted and must leave Thebes. And surely, if this is true, he will some day incur the more dreadful pollution of which Apollo spoke.

775. The word Δωρὶς is spoken with a sense of the high dignity of the race. Here, as in 267, we feel the importance for Oedipus of such matters.

ἠγόμην, I think, means 'I lived,' 'I passed my days.' Hesych. ἠγόμην: διῆγον. Σοφοκλῆς Θυέστῃ δευτέρῳ.

776. The repetition of the word τύχη 773 is significant. See notes on 442, 977.

779–780. Three times Oedipus uses words which suggest that the taunt was not worth serious consideration.

786. The psychology of Oedipus is masterly. He feels here, as he does when he thinks that Creon is at work against him, the creeping evil. His tragedy is heightened by the fact that evils far more terrible than he suspects are indeed secretly making their way.

804–805. Though Oedipus is engrossed in his story, imagination making vivid every detail of a scene which he had almost forgotten, the poet has contrived that his words shall plainly show his legal innocence. He was attacked, and defended himself against the aggressor. Contrast this with Eur. *Phoen.* 41 ff.

810. The delight of battle makes Oedipus, Jocasta and the audience for the moment forget the tragic meaning of the fight. We admire Oedipus as we pity him. There is nothing but enthusiasm in his voice as he cries κτείνω δὲ τοὺς ξύμπαντας. Then follows a long pause in which it is important to instruct the prompter not to prompt. At εἰ δὲ τῷ ξένῳ... the voice of Oedipus is changed.

825. Oedipus still thinks that even if he slew Laïus and must leave Thebes, there is a chance of avoiding the greater pollution of parricide and incest. Only, he thinks, this means that he must remain an exile from Corinth as from Thebes. (L has μήτ' ἐμβατεύειν 'made by an early hand' from μῆστ', or possibly from μή μ'. Γ μή με βατεύειν.)

828. *Cf.* 816, 1311.

833. The fine effect of συμφορᾶς here depends partly on the use of that word earlier in the play. See *e.g.* note on 44.

841. The subtle use of περισσόν suggests the state of mind of Jocasta. To Oedipus she means to say: 'What of special note...' as Jebb translates. To us she reveals her fear that she has spoken πόλλ' ἄγαν (767). She knows that the hope of Oedipus is vain.

848. *Cf.* 525.

851–858. I hope it is not necessary to argue against those who

think that Jocasta is punished for impiety. But it must be clearly understood that she is not innocent. Here she goes much farther than at lines 707–712. It is not merely human ministers, but the god himself, whose word she now will disregard. The impiety springs not from her reason and her experience, as does the legitimate scepticism of 712, but from her love for Oedipus. She would now do or say anything which would save him from anxiety and spare him the knowledge that he slew her husband.

853. *Cf.* notes on 87, 505.

855. ὁ δύστηνος surely confirms the opinion that Jocasta really cared about the death of her child. This word will prove of great dramatic value. Here Jocasta applies the epithet in her ignorance to Oedipus. We shall hear the same epithet again when she knows all that it means, in her unforgettable cry at line 1071. After that the chorus will give the title to their King, once happy (1303). Finally Oedipus (1308) will take it for his own.

859. This is not a piece of significant impiety, but, as Jebb says, an almost mechanical assent. The contrast between the passionate desire of Oedipus for honour and for truth and the impetuous, loving, and unscrupulous, attempt of Jocasta to escape from reality, is marked. At line 707 she bade him 'listen to her' ἀφεὶς ἑαυτόν. He now bids her send for the eye-witness, μηδὲ τοῦτ' ἀφῇς.

863 ff. The members of the chorus are normal, pious Greek gentlemen. If we recall the drama which they have witnessed, we shall not be surprised at their anxious comment. They have seen their land devastated by a blight and pestilence, and they have heard a trusted prophet declare that it is their King, a stranger who once saved the land from a somewhat similar catastrophe, who is responsible, because of an old pollution, for the present disaster. Though they cannot bring themselves to believe that Oedipus is guilty, they are not unmoved by such a suggestion. They know that, under a 'faultless king, who, being like a god, maintains righteous judgment,' not only are the people virtuous, but also the land and cattle are fertile. The Greek audience does not need to be reminded of this point of view, which becomes a commonplace of the later discussion of the good King and the bad. See *e.g.* Themist. XV p. 188 D ff. The same orator (XV p. 191 C) uses the opening of the *Iliad* as a stock example: we have seen that Sophocles also had in mind the quarrel and the pestilence of *Il.* 1. When the 'shafts of the god' ravaged the host for nine days, it was, Themistius reminds us, because of the harshness of the King to the priest: the people suffered though they had recommended pious moderation. Secondly, then, the chorus have seen the anger of Oedipus overcoming his reason, and making him insult the

prophet, as Agamemnon insults Chrysis. They have seen their excellent King, the 'father of his people,' filled with suspicions, like a Tyrant, and launching against his friend accusations, threats, claims to an overwhelming, lawless power, such as a Tyrant normally uses. Finally, they have heard from the queen a story of cruelty and impiety, from Oedipus talk of the dread of the most terrible pollutions. They have spoken, as piety enjoins, of the cautious fear ὄκνος (834) which these dangers, prophesied by Apollo himself, demand. The response has been from Jocasta an assertion of unbelief, and from Oedipus something like an acquiescence in that impious assertion. Now, if we remember that the chorus are actors in the drama, that, unlike the audience, they do not know the sequel and have heard this story to-day for the first time, can we wonder that they doubt whether, after all, in spite of their love and their knowledge of his past excellence, they ought not to believe that Oedipus is a 'Tyrant' rightly doomed? That, as I have argued in the Introduction, is not the view of the audience: it is not even the settled conviction of the chorus. What they say is simply that they wonder and are distressed.

They pray for purity and reverence. They assert that it is pride and violence that produce a Tyrant. They hope that Oedipus is not a Tyrant. Yet, if a man be tyrannical, naturally he must perish. And, indeed, there is another difficulty. The oracles must come true, if religion is to be saved. For the relevance of the whole poem I have argued on pp. xli ff. Here I will quote one of the later descriptions of Tyrant and good King, commonplace based upon the stock of popular morality, whether the particular mode of elaboration be that of Plato or Xenophon, Themistius, Dio, Plutarch or Julian.

Dio (1 § 15) asserts that the good King is 'First of all, one that is a careful servant of the gods...and after the gods he cares for men.' He shows himself 'placable and gentle to all men, since he thinks all men are his friends and well-wishers' (§ 20). He 'loves work more than many other men love pleasure or money' (§ 21). In contrast with this ideal monarch, we hear of the tyrannical King: 'A man who becomes, as a ruler, violent, unjust, lawless...insatiate of pleasure, insatiate of money, swift to suspicion, irreconcilable when he has fallen into anger, with a quick ear for slander, not amenable to the persuasion of reasonable words, cunning, a plotter, mean, obstinate, raising the base to eminence, bearing a grudge against the better sort,...one that thinks no man his friend and has no friend.' That is, of course, no description of Oedipus, who is essentially the good King. But there is enough material there for a fair commentary on the attitude of our chorus! Do you think that the type is suggested by Nero or Caligula? Well, Plato's Tyrant, a man full of

fears and desires, compelled by some stroke of fortune (*ὑπό τινος τύχης*) to become a despot, one who, though he is not master of himself, essays to rule over others, becomes 'envious, suspicious, unjust, friendless, foul and impious, *ἀνόσιος*,' unfortunate himself and a cause of ill-fortune to others. The details of the picture are to be found, as I have pointed out in many notes and in the Introduction, before Plato, Xenophon or even Antisthenes created the stock formula.

865. For the *νόμοι* here and *κρατύνων* in 903 *cf.* Heracleitus (144 p. 78) *τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θείου· κρατεῖ δὲ τοσοῦτον ὁκόσον ἐθέλει, καὶ ἐξαρκεῖ πᾶσι καὶ περιγίγνεται.*

866–867. Bruhn thinks that both strophe and antistrophe are corrupt (see Heskenrath's metrical analysis in Bruhn p. 220) but that the antistrophe preserves the true rhythm. I agree with Jebb in thinking that the strophe is sound. The rhythm of these two lines combines the iambic effect of 863–865 with the logaoedic effect (if I may use the expression) of the following lines. Thus $-\cup\cup-\cup\cup- = --\cup-\cup\cup-$.

874. Literally 'if a man be filled....' The shift and the omission of the nominative *τις* are made possible by the familiar sentiment. For the topic of wealth, satiety, insolence and ruin see Headlam's lecture on the *Agamemnon* (Cambridge Praelections 1906) and his edition of that play. Wealth beyond measure tends to become wealth 'that profits not,' though the process is not inevitable. The good man's Sophrosyne, which can be content with a modest sufficiency, is able to make good use of fortune's lavishness. A wise man is modest in good luck, cheerful in bad. It is obvious that nothing we have hitherto witnessed justifies the inference that Oedipus is a man 'unable to bear' good fortune. Only, the chorus feel, his conduct has shown signs of a dangerous temper. In the immediate sequel, Jocasta will be thrown into a state of desperate boldness by an apparent stroke of good luck. Presently Oedipus will himself be seized by the same dangerous spirit of elation.

876. I venture to suggest *ἀκρότατά τις δ' ἀναβὰς* for the MS reading *ἀκροτάταν εἰσαναβᾶσ'*, and to suppose that *ἀνὴρ* has fallen out after *ἀπότομον* in l. 877.

885. The stock marks of a tyranny are mentioned. First Injustice. Plato coined a phrase, but not an idea, when he said that *τυραννὶς* was *ἡ ἐσχάτη ἀδικία*. That Oedipus has shown too little 'fear' for justice in the treatment of Creon is evident. On the other hand, he has not refused to 'honour the gods and the shrines of the gods.' But this also is characteristic of Tyrants, and the chorus, seeing his attitude to Teiresias, and hearing the impious words of Jocasta, fear that they are symptoms of worse. As Sophocles himself makes his hero say, *Ai.* 1350, 'For a despot to be pious is not easy,' *τόν τοι τύραννον εὐσεβεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδιον*, a principle which

is assumed in the epitaph of the princess Archedike (Thuc. VI 59), who, though her father, her brothers, her husband, and her children were τύραννοι, was not carried away into wanton pride of mind. The proverbial origin of the whole picture, with its association of impiety, greed, and injustice, is given by Solon 4, 12–15: men grow rich by unjust means: they spare neither sacred property, nor state property: they steal, and prey upon one another: they do not respect the holy shrine of Justice. These persons are the 'great' men whose mischievous practices Solon has to check: if they continue, the result will be a despotism (9, 3). The association of impiety, greed, sexual violence persists in philosophical jargon: so that Ps.-Arist. περὶ ἀρετῶν divides ἀδικία into the three kinds, ἀσέβεια, πλεονεξία, ὕβρις, 1251 a. Plato *Rep.* 568 D, 574 D may serve to illustrate the way in which the stock notion, older than Solon, that bad men rob the gods themselves, passes into the tyrant theme. Cp. Plutarch *Mor.* 330 E, F for the tyrant's φιληδονία, ἀθεότης, and πλεονεξία καὶ ἀδικία.

889. If any of my readers are already convinced that this line can be properly said to refer to Oedipus, I apologise for arguing the matter again. But if I have failed to convince any reader, I will ask him to read the following summary of the proverbial cliches.

1. All men seek their own advantage, most men seeking it in wealth. See Intr. p. xlviii, Solon 13, and Eur. *fr.* 794, where, by a characteristic piece of subtlety, the gods themselves are said to be subject to this universal disease. This proverb is interpreted by Socrates in a noble sense, as meaning that all must love the highest when they see it. Since all men seek their own advantage, men sin only as a result of ignorance of good and evil!

2. Bad men seek money without regard for virtue, by all means, good or bad. Eur. *fr.* 758 'For bad men Gain takes precedence of Justice.' Add Eur. *fr.* 459, 738, 341, 354, 378, 417, 419.

3. Kingship and riches are proverbially associated. See Intr. p. xlix. Add Eur. *fr.* 420, Apollonides *fr.* 1 N. p. 825, *Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 130 N. p. 867.

4. Bad Kings are, therefore, proverbially persons who prefer ill-gotten gains to justice. In Eur. *Heracleid.* the play begins with a sad reflection from the excellent Iolaus to the effect that, in his experience, the unjust man who pursues gain at all costs, though a bad citizen and a bad friend, is, at any rate, 'an excellent friend to himself.' This is not merely an old man's talk. It is the theme which the play is to contradict. The excellent king of Athens rejects the appeal to self-interest which is urged by the representative of the barbaric Eurystheus: Athens herself shows generosity and clemency, and wins a reward that is truly a 'gain.'

In contrast with this pleasing Athenian picture, the wicked Theban Eteocles (Eur. *Phoen.* 524) remarks εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι | κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, a frank statement of a principle on which many people act, though they prefer to say (Plut. *Mor.* 18 E) τοῦ μὲν δικαίου τὴν δόκησιν ἄρνυσο, | τὰ δ' ἔργα τοῦ πᾶν δρῶντος ἔνθα κερδανεῖς. On the other hand, the good old Athenian king Erechtheus, when he acts as Polonius to a young prince, advises him to try to make his fortune, but by no means, if he wishes it to remain with him, to get it by injustice. (This speech well illustrates other Tyrant commonplaces: the youth is to shun 'disgraceful loves' for fear of vengeance, and to choose frank friends, not flatterers, Eur. *fr.* 362.) We remember that Pericles, under whom the democracy was really ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχή, was χρημάτων διαφανῶς ἀδωρότατος (Thuc. II 65 8), φιλόπολίς τε (*cf.* 880) καὶ χρημάτων κρείσσων.

890–891. If we have once understood 889, I think we shall have no further difficulty. The Tyrant is proverbially lascivious, making the daughters and sons of the citizens the prey of his lust. Now of course this is not true of Oedipus. Nor does the chorus at all suggest that it is true. The language is vague enough to be a natural expression of the horror caused by the suggestion of possible future incest. Very skilfully Sophocles has made this suggestion contribute one more touch to the general sketch of the imaginary Tyrant. These lines are precisely like the rest of the chorus. Just as no one in the audience can possibly suppose that Sophocles means him to think that Oedipus is essentially unchaste, so no one will think that he is essentially a greedy grabber of wealth, an impious mocker at the gods and insulter of shrines. He is human, and, like most human beings in high places, he shows symptoms of his kinship, through humanity, with Tyrants. That is all. The drama gains in strength, because fundamentally Oedipus is so far removed from all such pride and sin! He falls in spite of his virtues, into a calamity which piety, and the chorus, would fain reserve for monsters of wickedness.

892. For the shafts of the god see 205 and note on 470.

901. τάδε, which Bruhn strangely takes to mean 'this that I say' must in this chorus mean 'these oracles about which we are all thinking.' For a somewhat similar vague use of a pronoun see line 317.

903 ff. When we hear ἀλλ' ὦ κρατύνων, we may not, perhaps, remember, but we are certainly moved by the fact that we have heard the same words before, in a very different context. Thus the priest addressed Oedipus (14) in the speech which made him almost equal with a god. The chorus, who would gladly defend their human προστάτης, yet must cling at all costs to a greater champion than any man. Oedipus is a Master, who, they fear, is also behaving like a Tyrant. One Master there is greater than any human King. So the priest had urged Oedipus to

save the city, reminding him that his good name of Saviour was at stake! (46–48). Now it is the name of Zeus Himself that is to be vindicated. We have learnt how Oedipus as King would claim sole right and sole authority. Zeus alone is really King of All Things. For the answer to this see line 1252. The effect of this contrast between the human, mortal, monarch with his kingdom of a day, and the eternal empire of Zeus is heightened by the use of the pronouns *σὲ τάν τε σὰν*.... See also 497.

The contrast between the mortal ruler and Zeus is appropriate to the Tyrant theme. We remember, *e.g.*, how Pericles was described by comic poets (Cratinus Θρᾷτται, Koch Vol. 1 p. 35 *fr.* 71 Χείρωνες, Koch Vol. 1 p. 86 *fr.* 240 Στάσις δὲ καὶ πρεσβυγενὴς Κρόνος ἀλλήλοισι μιγέντε | μέγιστον τίκτετον τύραννον, ὃν δὴ κεφαληγερέταν θεοὶ καλέουσιν, *fr.* 241 Ἥραν τέ οἱ Ἀσπασίαν τίκτει καταπυγοσύνη, Hermippus Μοῖραι, Koch Vol. 1 p. 235 *fr.* 41, Telecleides Ἡσίοδοι, Koch Vol. 1 p. 214 *fr.* 17, ἀδήλων δραμάτων p. 220 *fr.* 42).

A good dramatic application of the contrast is made by Aeschylus in *Supp.* 365 foll. The chorus try to persuade the constitutional King to exceed his authority. He refuses to act without the people (369, 398) but they cry (370): *σύ τοι πόλις* (*cf. O.T.* 629, 630)...*κρατύνεις*....*μονοσκήπτροισι δ' ἐν θρόνοις χρέος | πᾶν ἐπικραίνεις*. When he has gone to consult his people, we hear (524) *ἄναξ ἀνάκτων, μακάρων μακάρτατε καὶ τελέων τελειότατον κράτος, ὄλβιε Ζεῦ*, and the result is announced in the words (623, 624) *ἤκουσεν*...*δῆμος*..., *Ζεὺς δ' ἐπέκρανεν τέλος*.

907. The notion that the reference is to an oracle-collection, current under the name of Laïus (Wilamowitz in *Hermes* 34 p. 76 ff.), is bound up with the perverse notion that this chorus is irrelevant and must be explained by contemporary politics.

911. Editors are very severe about Jocasta. She became sceptical for very good reasons, by no means frivolously, but by suffering. She has further dared to speak impiously, but not because of frivolity: unless indeed it be frivolous to love a man more even than one's own safety and virtue. Now, in her terrible anxiety 'a thought has come to her'... to pray. She prays, tragically enough to the Apollo who stands at the palace door, because he is nearest, *i.e.*, most intimately connected with her family. And Apollo as we know is to send the truth and the ruin. Bruhn says that all this characterises the frivolous queen. A thought occurs to her.... Yes, but the real dramatic value of that phrase is this. We have heard the chorus sing that religion is lost. Then, suddenly, as if to drive away all gloomy thoughts, the queen who is so soon to perish, comes with offerings and prayers to the god. It is true that she cares more for her husband than for any god! And that is tragic, not frivolous.

914 ff. Passion, pain and fear: see note on 675. The hot fit of anger has been followed by a cold fit of fear. A wise man is moderate in adversity as in prosperity: among the maxims of the wise are these: 'Be not grieved at every happening,' *μὴ ἐπὶ παντὶ λυποῦ* (Periander, Mullach Vol. I p. 215: see also *id. ib.* p. 218); 'In good fortune be not proud, nor cast down in evil fortune,' *ἀποροῦντα μὴ ταπεινοῦσθαι* (Cleobulus, Diels p. 521 line 2, Mullach Vol. I p. 212); 'In good luck be moderate, in bad be sensible,' *μέτριος...φρόνιμος* (Periander, Diels p. 523 line 17, Mullach Vol. I p. 214). Moreover, proverb says, one should always 'reason as to the unknown by the known,' *τὰ ἀφανῆ τοῖς φανεροῖς τεκμαίρου* (Solon, Diels p. 521 line 10, Mullach Vol. I p. 212). Oedipus, in fact, is now unbalanced in mind. As Dio remarks (III § 34), *ὁ ἀδύνατος μὲν ὀργὴν ἐπικατασχεῖν...ἀδύνατος δὲ ἀπώσασθαι λύπην ἐνίοτε μηδενὸς λυπηροῦ παρόντος...ἀδύνατος δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπελάσαι φόβον, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦντα ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς ἀλλὰ τὰ μέγιστα βλάπτοντα, πῶς οὐκ ἄνανδρος οὗτος σφόδρα;* We all know the Horatian ideal, which is as ancient as the Greek literature, *Odes* II 10 13 *Sperat infestis, metuit secundis alteram sortem bene praeparatum pectus.* That is not attained by Oedipus. Of him we must think *ἀσύνετος ὅστις ἐν φόβῳ μὲν ἀσθενής, | λαβὼν δὲ μικρὸν τῆς τύχης φρονεῖ μέγα* (Eur. *fr.* 735). As we shall see, both clauses apply to Oedipus. Yet, again, he is greater than any motto. His high courage, which shrinks from no truth, is the more moving because he is physically unable to control his fear.

923. Jocasta speaks as a Queen, and the last phrase is a prayer for Oedipus as King of Thebes. For the stock comparison see Aesch. *Sept.* 2. *ὀκνοῦμεν* indicates the proper spirit of cautious fear. See line 834.

924 ff. The rhyme is not entirely without effect. This Messenger from Corinth is not heroic, but an eager, rather vulgar, busybody, full of his great news and delighted with his own cleverness.

928. The ambiguity 'wife and mother...of his children' is intentional.

929. This reply is tragically significant. This scene is to prove that Jocasta and all she loves are, not merely not 'happy,' but of all human souls most miserable. The beginning of the final calamity is marked by the giving of the name of happy to the victim: the moral of all is that no man should be called happy till his end.

932. So Polycrates in Hdt. III 42 *ἡσθεὶς τοῖσι ἔπεσι* (of the fisherman) answered *κάρτα τε εὖ ἐποίησας καὶ χάρις διπλέη τῶν τε λόγων καὶ τοῦ δώρου. Cf.* Hdt. V 50 *οὐδένα γὰρ λόγον εὐεπέα λέγεις κ.τ.λ.* In view of the frequent use of Ionic by Sophocles I doubt if Jocasta means more than 'good words.'

937. These words are true, but in far different sense from that which the messenger intends.

947. Jocasta prayed, and there came immediately what seemed like an answer of good import to her prayer. But she is not, as the Greeks said, 'able to endure her good luck.' Instead of thanks to the gods for this relief, she breaks out into fresh impiety. Of course the audience is intelligent enough to know that in fact the news is not good, but indifferent: and that, pious or impious, Jocasta is doomed. But her fate is more tragic because of the spirit of blind confidence which now seizes her. Observe that it is Luck, she thinks, that has saved Oedipus.

953. It is impossible to say exactly with what effect, but certainly not without some strengthening of the dramatic value of the language, we hear the words of line 687 again.

957. The Messenger is naturally astonished to find that the part of his news which he expected to be received with sorrow arouses such excitement and such relief.

960. This is the same Oedipus, a King with a King's suspicions, who has made the chorus so anxious for his character and fate.

962. When Jocasta spoke of the death of Laïus she spoke of the infant who should have lived to slay him as ὁ δύστηνος. See note on 855. This ὁ τλήμων has for the audience its effect, hardly noticed, but intended by the poet, in relation to what is past and what is still to come.

969. This line is important, and not always understood. Oedipus, for a moment, in the first shock of relief at hearing that he can no longer become the murderer of Polybus, has spoken of Delphi and of divination in the tone of Jocasta herself. But Oedipus, as his whole life's adventure proves, is pious and believes Apollo. So, quite seriously, he thinks, after the first glad cry of human relief, that he must not presume—that, after all, oracles are often ambiguous. Perhaps the old king died of broken-hearted sorrow for his absent son. The general effect of the speech is rash and wicked: but this momentary recoil is sincere and pious and characteristic of the hero. Somewhat similar is the recoil of Creon before his own far more appalling impiety at *Antig.* 1043. The effect of Jocasta's eager insistence is, naturally, to awake still more thoroughly his pious fear.

972. ἄξι' οὐδενός, 'not important,' though not necessarily *untrue*: see 969, and *cf.* Hdt. 1 120 ἀποσκήψαντος τοῦ ἐνυπνίου ἐς φλαῦρον...

977. This speech marks the height of the confidence, and wicked confidence, of Jocasta. To say that Luck governs all human affairs, that a random life is best, that providence exists neither in man nor for man, and that nothing is to be feared, is to deny the fundamental doctrine of the

Greek religion of Sophrosyne. Men should believe in Fortune, but not trust in Luck, *τύχην νόμιζε, τύχῃ μὴ πίστευε* (Mullach Vol. I pp. 217, 218). They should honour the goddess Foresight, and look ever to the future, *πρόνοιαν τίμα, ὅρα τὸ μέλλον* (*id. ib.*). Not only good fortune, but also good sense is necessary for a man's prosperity, and good sense really means a modest sense of human limitations. When luck seems good, when winds are fair, we should most be on our guard: for good luck flatters us often to ruin. It is precisely because of the uncertainty of the morrow that we ought to be modest (Simonides 32 and 62), since 'in a little time God changeth all things.' The queen has forgotten the law of the alternation of human good and evil, the theme, for example, of Pindar *Ol.* II, where the house of Laïus is cited as an instance. She ought to cry: 'Thank God for this small boon: and now *μὴ θράσσοι χρόνος ὄλβον ἐφέρπων* (*Ol.* VI 97). See also *Ol.* XII 1–13, where the invocation of the Saviour Fortune (*cf. O.T.* 81) is combined with pious talk of the veiled future, the changes of fortune, the falseness of hope. When the sailors after the storm went on their way *οὐ πεποιθότες τύχῃ*, they were not so *relieved* that 'they couldn't believe their luck' but so *schooled* by their recent adventure that they 'did not trust good Fortune' (Aesch. *Ag.* 668). The right prayer for anyone who is lucky is this: *νίκη δ' ἐπείπερ ἕσπετ' ἐμπέδως μένοι* (*Ag.* 854), uttered in a spirit not of boasting, but of caution. Men need for success both luck and calculation. Too often a piece of luck upsets the mental balance (Thuc. III 97). Demosthenes, over persuaded, and also *τῇ τύχῃ ἐλπίσας*, attacks and is defeated. See the political application of this doctrine, which is true, not superstitious, in Thuc. IV 18. True as it is, however, that good luck often turns men's heads and leads them to disaster, it is not true that caution always spells safety. Nicias may serve as our example, who thought he could by a safe policy leave the name behind him of one that brought no disaster to his city, *νομίζων ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου τοῦτο ξυμβαίνειν καὶ ὅστις ἐλάχιστα τύχῃ αὐτὸν παραδίδωσιν* (Thuc. V 16). It was significant of confusion and reversal of old moralities in the war that the pious Melians were destroyed because, forsooth, they 'put their trust in their good luck,' and must submit to the insult of a moral lecture on the danger of such confidence, delivered by the flushed and wicked persecutor (Thuc. V 112, 113). I do not doubt it happened: the modern newspapers show that human nature has not changed! Add III 45, 6, but do not forget, in view of Mr Cornford's strange misconception, to temper your contempt for Thucydides by a quiet consideration of I 140, 1. Plutarch (*Mor.* p. 97 E) rightly asserts that morality depends on a denial of the supremacy of *τύχη*, and quotes *O.T.* 110 as such a denial: men are superior to other animals, not in *τύχη*, but in the possession of *τὸν λογισμὸν καὶ*

τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ τὴν πρόνοιαν (98 D). This merely repeats the doctrine of Democritus 119 p. 407 'men have created an image of Luck as the excuse for their own folly': *βαιὰ γὰρ φρονήσει τύχη μάχεται.* Let me conclude this long note with a reference to the wisdom attributed by Diog. L. 1 68 and 70 to Cheilon: *πρόνοια περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος, λογισμῷ καταληπτή, ἀνδρὸς ἐστιν ἀρετή,* and yet *μαντικὴν μὴ ἐχθαίρειν.* The language betrays a later author than any Cheilon, but the wisdom is the wisdom of remote antiquity. See note on 617 and *cf.* Hdt. III 36 *ἀγαθόν τι πρόνοον εἶναι· σοφὸν δὲ ἡ προμηθίη,* and Epicharmus 269 *οὐ μετανοεῖν ἀλλὰ προνοεῖν χρὴ τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν σοφόν.* But *πρόνοια* in our passage is ambiguous. Jocasta denies not only the importance of human caution, but also *τοῦ θείου ἡ προνοίη* (Hdt. III 108).

979. Soph. *fr.* 287 *τίκτει γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐσθλὸν εἰκαία σχολή.*

981. A serious suggestion intended to help Oedipus. Even if he cannot, like Jocasta, dismiss all fear of prophecy, he may at least assume that the oracle means nothing important. See line 970. It is very probable that Sophocles remembered Hippias (Hdt. VI 107). Similarly Astyages was bidden by the Magians, *θάρσει...καὶ θυμὸν ἔχε ἀγαθόν,* when Cyrus had been called 'King' in a childish game. Astyages himself replied *καὶ αὐτὸς ταύτῃ πλεῖστος γνώμην εἰμί...ἐξήκειν τε τὸν ὄνειρον* (*cf.* 1182) *καί μοι τὸν παῖδα τοῦτον εἶναι δεινὸν ἔτι οὐδέν* (Hdt. I 120).

986. Jocasta has failed. Oedipus speaks in the spirit of pious caution.

998. Eur. *fr.* 30 has this pathetic *ἀλλ' ὅμως,—ἀλλ' ὅμως | οἰκτρός τις αἰὼν πατρίδος ἐκλιπεῖν ὅρους.*

1002. From the excessive fear of 917 Oedipus has passed to the *ὄκνος* of 986. He will soon be filled with a mad confidence. Just so did Jocasta pass from *ὄκνος* (922) to her bold and wicked mood (977). In his excessive fear and in his excessive confidence alike, Oedipus conforms to the ancient tragic psychology. Cf. Aesch. *Persae* 599 *ὅταν κλύδων | κακῶν ἐπέλθῃ, πάντα δειμαίνειν φιλεῖ· | ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὐροῇ, πεποιθέναι | τὸν αὐτὸν αἰὲν δαίμον' οὐριεῖν τύχης.*

1005. The messenger is deliberately presented as cynical and self-satisfied. The contrast between his pettiness and the greatness of Oedipus is the object of this characterisation.

1011. See note on 88.

1023. This line is of great psychological importance. Oedipus, as we have seen in the note on line 726, tends to become absorbed with one idea at a time, and to forget all other thoughts. He is moved now by the memory of the love of his reputed father. This shows us that, at the supreme crisis, he is dominated by natural human affection. He has longed to know the truth of his parentage, not only because of the oracle

which he fears, but also from the eagerness of a son to know his father and his mother. From this moment he forgets about his fears. He is absorbed by the thought that he may now at last find his parents. That is why he cannot understand Jocasta's appeal. His own first fear is, now, that he may prove to be of servile origin: even that, however, he is noble enough to understand, matters little. Even if he be a slave, he has a father and a mother. Thus the moment of his most impious confidence is also a moment of his nobility.

1025. If the MSS had offered us *τυχών* we should have accepted it, but I think Bruhn is right to reject the emendation. Oedipus, absorbed by the news that Polybus is not his father and seized already by the fresh fear that he may be of servile origin has not noticed the form of the Corinthian's statements. 1018, indeed, is ambiguous. At 1020 Oedipus hears nothing after *ἀλλ' οὔ σ' ἐγείνατο*. For this trait in his character see note on line 726. The rather humorous mystification of *εὑρών* is characteristic of the Corinthian and is spoilt if we accept *τυχών*.

1026. Jocasta begins to understand.

1029. Oedipus, critical of evidence where criticism is tragically misguided, wonders whether, after all, this messenger himself may be his father. These questions are pressed home in order to prove the good faith of *εὑρών*. Their effect is to make Jocasta certain of the truth.

1031. 'Why, what ailed me, that you found me in evil plight (and so had to 'save' me)?' L *ἐν καιροῖς λαμβάνεις*. Other MSS *ἐν καιροῖς με λ.*, *ἐν κακοῖς με λ.*, and *ἐν κακοῖς λ.* Jebb accepts *ἀγχάλαισι*, but *εὑρών* does not imply that the Corinthian 'found' Oedipus *as a baby*. That point is first made clear at line 1034.

1032. Jocasta knows that Oedipus is her son. But until line 1042 she struggles against the realisation of the knowledge.

1035. The inference made by Oedipus has been missed by interpreters. If he was 'found' with his feet thus pierced and fastened together, it must have been *as a baby*. He has not yet known why his ancles are swollen. He now hears that it is through an act of mutilation which he *must* have remembered if it had occurred *after infancy*.

1051. The naiveté of this guess would be intolerable to a modern dramatist. But to an audience which is interested in the important matters, it is acceptable and is justified by the effect of 1053.

1056 ff. It is important that Jocasta should speak with a terrible self-control. If she screams, as did Mr Reinhardt's Jocasta, Oedipus can hardly play his part and retain our sympathy. Moreover, her own exit will be revolting instead of tragic.

1066–1067. Though we are far away from the simple moral issue of *φρόνησις* which was the keynote of the Teiresias scene, and an

important element in the Creon scene, the effect of all that we have heard heightens the tragic value of the refusal.

1071. See note on line 855.

1075. σιωπῆς: see note on 1056.

1076. We remember the cry of Eteocles in Aesch. *Sept.* 690.

The greatness of this tragic moment depends on the likeness and the unlikeness of the temper of Oedipus to that which we have already noticed in Jocasta. When good news came she bade her husband fear nothing, deny the value of foresight, and live at random. But her 'random' life is really εἰκαία σχολή, letting things slide. Oedipus, obsessed by the notion that he is about to discover his origin, has forgotten all fears. He challenges fortune; is prepared to face the worst and the best that truth can reveal. This is a spirit of nobler daring than Jocasta could conceive. Yet this also is impious: and the delusion grows in the mind of Oedipus, so that he passes from the excessive boldness of 1076 to the boasting of 1080 ff.

1080. The theme of Τύχη has now reached its climax. Nunquam solido stetit superba felicitas: et ingentium imperiorum magna fastigia oblivione fragilitatis humanae collapsa sunt. The doomed man calls himself the son of Luck, Giver of Good. He forgets that Luck gives evil also. The relation of this theme to the general moral development would be evident to any Athenian. The doctrine which makes the words of Oedipus so significant is well stated by Euripides *fr.* 1073

οὐ χρή ποτ' ὀρθαῖς ἐν τύχαις βεβηκότα
ἕξειν τὸν αὐτὸν δαίμον' εἰς ἀεὶ δοκεῖν·
ὁ γὰρ θεός πως, εἰ θεόν σφε χρὴ καλεῖν,
κάμνει ξυνὼν τὰ πολλὰ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀεί.
θνητῶν δὲ θνητὸς ὄλβος· οἱ δ' ὑπέρφρονες
καὶ τῷ παρόντι τοὐπιὸν πιστούμενοι
ἔλεγχον ἔλαβον τῆς τύχης ἐν τῷ παθεῖν.

The same doctrine is stated in Eur. *fr.* 1074, 1075. The fundamental necessity is this: 'Being man, remember the fortune that is common to all who are men,' ἄνθρωπος ὤν, μέμνησο τῆς κοινῆς τύχης (Hippothoon, *fr.* 1 N. p. 827), ἀνθρώπεια δ' ἄν τοι πήματ' ἂν τύχοι βροτοῖς (Aesch. *Pers.* 706). Men should remember that 'good luck is a gift to men that only a god can give' (Aesch. *Sept.* 625) instead of which they make good luck itself their god, and 'more than a god' (*Cho.* 57, spoken of usurping Tyrants who inspire fear instead of awe), whereas really 'not to be foolish in mind' is 'the greatest gift of god' (*Ag.* 927). Thus Sophrosyne is the right attitude, and implies a recognition of the instability of human fortune, and of the dependence of men on the uncertain favour of heaven.

1081. Notice first that the mention of 'the good gifts' of Fortune gives a strength to the dramatic situation with regard to Jocasta, which has not been generally appreciated. The commonplace of Eur. *fr.* 1040 will help us to understand: *ἐὰν ἴδῃς πρὸς ὕψος ἠρμένον τινά, | λαμπρῷ τε πλούτῳ καὶ γένει γαυρούμενον* (this is exactly *πλουσίῳ χλίοντα γένει*), | *ὀφρύν τε μείζω τῆς τύχης ἐπηρκότα, | τούτου ταχεῖαν νέμεσιν εὐθὺ προσδόκα.* Oedipus thinks that Jocasta is haughty, because of 'wealth and birth': he himself talks of Fortune giver of good gifts, as his origin, and boasts of his descent. He has forgotten that Luck is *μεγαλόδωρος ἀλλ' ἀβέβαιος* (Democritus, Diels 176 p. 417). Pious caution bids us remember that *τὰ μεγάλα δῶρα τῆς τύχης ἔχει φόβον* (*Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 547). Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 702 E *τοὺς ἀπαιδεύτους καὶ ἀμαθεῖς ἡ τύχη μικρὸν ἐκκουφίσασα πλούτοις τισὶν ἢ δόξαις ἢ ἀρχαῖς, μετεώρους γιγνομένους εὐθὺς ἐπιδείκνυσι πίπτοντας.* The famous image of Heracleitus (Diels 52 p. 69), *αἰὼν παῖς ἐστι παίζων, πεττεύων· παιδὸς δ' ἡ βασιληΐη* (recalled by Philo *de vit. Moys.* 1 p. 85, quoted by Mullach Vol. 1 p. 320, *τύχης ἀσταθμητότερον οὐδὲν ἄνω καὶ κάτω τὰ ἀνθρώπεια πεττευούσης*) is based on old moralities. Add Eupolis, *ἀδήλ. δραμ.* Koch Vol. 1 p. 353 *fr.* 356. The confident assertion *οὐκ ἀτιμασθήσομαι* rings ominously in ears which are familiar with the maxim, *οὐκ ἔστι κακὸν ἀνεπιδόκητον ἀνθρώποις, ὀλίγῳ δὲ χρόνῳ πάντα μεταρρίπτει θεός* (Simonides 62): *ἄελπτον οὐδέν, πάντα δ' ἐλπίζειν χρεών* says Euripides (*fr.* 761). On the other hand, the 'expectations of them that lack understanding are irrational' (Democritus, Diels 292 p. 437). The result of the Pythagorean self-examination, the practical application of the *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, is this: *γνώσῃ...φύσιν περὶ παντὸς ὁμοίην, | ὥστε σε μήτε ἄελπτ' ἐλπίζειν, μήτε τι λήθειν* ([Pythag.] *Aureum Carm.* Mullach Vol. 1 p. 197 l. 52 ff.).

1082–1083. In calling the months his kinsmen, Oedipus is not merely adding a piece of rhetoric to his claim to be son of Luck. As moons wax, as seasons bring the great tree from the tiny shoot, so Oedipus, son of Fortune, has grown from the small estate of a wretched foundling to the magnificence of a throne. The changing months that saw him small, now see him great: they marked the stages, prescribed the limits, of his littleness, his growth and his splendour. As child of nature Oedipus claims that he has grown by nature's fostering care. 'He has faith in this Mother' says Jebb. Well, pious caution says: *τύχην νόμιζε· τύχῃ μὴ πίστευε.* Moons, like Fortune, wane as well as wax. The mention of the months recalls to the audience the cautious moral which Oedipus has forgotten (Soph. *fr.* 787):

> *ἀλλ' οὐμὸς αἰεὶ πότμος ἐν πυκνῷ θεοῦ*
> *τροχῷ κυκλεῖται*[1] *καὶ μεταλλάσσει φύσιν*
> *ὥσπερ σελήνης ὄψις εὐφρόνας δύο*

[1] For the wheel *cf.* Orphica XIX 6 ff. Mullach Vol. 1 p. 176.

στῆναι δύναιτ' ἂν οὔποτ' ἐν μορφῇ μιᾷ,
ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀδήλου πρῶτον ἔρχεται νέα
πρόσωπα καλλύνουσα καὶ πληρουμένη—
χὥταν περ αὐτῆς εὐπρεπεστάτη φανῇ
πάλιν διαρρεῖ....κἀπὶ μηδὲν ἔρχεται.

It will not be long before we hear the chorus sing that the generations of mankind are *ἴσα καὶ τὸ μηδέν*. Fortune changes with the seasons (Eur. *fr.* 330): there is the same cycle, growth and fading, in nature and in human life (Eur. *fr.* 415). Great cities become small, small become great: therefore, says Herodotus (1 5) *τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τωὐτῷ μένουσαν ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως.*

1084. The suggestion that we should read *τοιᾶσδε* for *τοιόσδε* is not, I think, happy. Oedipus is filled now not with the thought of the greatness of his mother, Fortune, but rather of the greatness she has given him as his birthgift. The months, which saw him in his humble birth, see him in his greatness to-day: *τοιόσδε* suggests not merely 'a son of *τύχη*,' but also *μέγας*.

Objection to the rhythm *ἔτι ποτ' ἄλλος* is mistaken. Oedipus is now carried away by a spirit of exalted energy which is almost lyrical in effect. The iambic verse is stirred by his excitement. For *ἐξέλθοιμι* see line 87. The repeated *ἐκ* helps to mark the dramatic climax.

1086. Professor Murray thinks that this 'joyous chorus strikes a curious note,' but admits that the contrast with the succeeding tragedy is effective. He suggests the right line of interpretation when he adds that perhaps the chorus has caught the mood of Oedipus. Bruhn also perceives this fact. Jebb makes no remark, and it is clear from the musical setting which was provided for the Cambridge performance that many readers have missed the tragic significance of the King's mad exaltation. Here even Paris failed. M. Mounet-Sully delivered the King's appeal to Fortune as the utterance of a depressed, almost despairing, hero, and the ladies who played the part of chorus attempted at line 1086 to cheer and console the drooping King. The truth is that the speech of Oedipus marks the climax, not of his fear, but of his confidence, and that the chorus in which the elders, having caught the infection of the King's rash mood, hail him as the son of a god, is the tragic development of the *motif* introduced at line 31. The priest of Zeus addressed the prince to whom his people came as humble suppliants, not indeed as a god, but almost as a god. We have seen the King heap insults on the minister of Apollo. We have heard the chorus contrast the little wisdom and the short-lived power of mortals with the wisdom of Zeus and Apollo, the perfect power of the only eternal King. Now, just before the truth which he himself has sought shatters the happiness of the hero, he speaks

of himself as of something set apart from the vicissitudes of ordinary humanity, a favourite of the goddess Fortune, and her son. The chorus respond by hailing him as indeed a son of the immortals, child of Apollo, Pan, Hermes, Dionysus.

1090. Since most scholars miss the dramatic value of the whole chorus, it is not surprising that they are puzzled by the mention of 'to-morrow's Full Moon.' Bruhn remarks that the saga may have contained some explanation, now lost. Wolff, who is quoted by Jebb, quite rightly suggested that to an Athenian audience the allusion to the Pandia, a festival held at the full moon in Elaphebolion, would seem natural enough. But this does not explain why Sophocles thinks it worth while to mention the festival. I hope that my version will not seem too free. It cannot, I think, be seriously doubted that to an Athenian audience the effect was as obvious and as dramatic as I have tried to make it. Oedipus speaks of the months that have watched his rise to greatness, the moons of nature, waxing as their kinsman Oedipus waxes. The chorus seize the notion, and cry that his full greatness shall yet be revealed...even at 'to-morrow's full moon festival.' It is perhaps worth noticing in this connection that the Orphic *Works and Days* began, according to Tzetzes, with a promise of instruction ὅππως ἂν Πανδῖα Σεληναίη πεπίθοιτο | ὕμπνιά σοι Δήμητρος ἀερσινόοιό τε Βάκχου | δῶρ' ἀναπεμπέμεναι καὶ ἐπητανὸν ὄλβον ὀπάζειν (Orphica LVII 15 ff. Mullach Vol. I. p. 189).

The reading is uncertain, but I believe that the interpretation of Jebb and Bruhn is right. Mr Harry's suggestion ἀπείργων is unsatisfactory: we ask why Cithaeron should think of trying to prevent such a consummation!

1095. τυράννοις, Oedipus (Jebb), not the 'princely house' (Bruhn). That the mountain should be praised and worshipped because it pleases the King, is a dangerous indication of the King's greatness. The use of the word τυράννοις here is, again, significant.

1103. These gods are chosen, ostensibly, because they are likely to haunt the mountains. For the combination of Pan and Loxias see *Agamemnon* 55. But, of course, Loxias has dramatic value here.

1105. Dionysus is the god of wild enthusiasm: the mention of him here marks the climax of the choral excitement. It is not by accident that this passage recalls 204 ff., where Apollo, the mountain-ranging Artemis, and, finally, Bacchus with his train of Maenads are summoned to the rescue of Thebes.

1110. Oedipus has remained on the palace steps, receiving the tribute of the chorus, who have worshipped him by their song. When the lyric is ended, there is a moment of tense silence. The old servant is seen approaching by the parodos, and the King speaks in the tones of self-

restraint, like a judge, determined to sift all evidence, careful of his own utterance. That is the explanation of the precise statement of the following lines. Line 1111 recalls 82 and 105. The contrast between guessing and knowledge shows the effort of the King to recover the exact balance of a sane mind.

1123. The answer is proud.

1127. The effect of this answer is to confirm at once the Corinthian's story. We must remember also that the lyric 1086 ff. has only just ended.

1135–1136. The alteration of the text to *νέμων....ἐπλησίαζεν* is pedantic, and destroys the life of the sentence: the Corinthian is eager, and excitedly changes his construction. The reason for this precise statement about the number of the flocks has strangely puzzled Bruhn. The Corinthian is really trying to kindle a spark of recollection in the mind of the older man. The professional detail at last serves his turn. It should be noticed that the old servant has no notion at present as to the identity of Oedipus with the long-forgotten infant. He has a secret on his mind, namely that Oedipus slew Laïus. But he has no thought of the greater tragedy, and is not at present trying to conceal anything. He really does not remember the talkative Corinthian.

1144. The eager question of the Corinthian arouses the rustic's suspicion.

1147. We remember such maxims as *κρέσσον τὰ οἰκῆια ἐλέγχειν ἁμαρτήματα ἢ τὰ ὀθνεῖα* (Democritus, Diels 60 p. 401), and perceive that Oedipus himself *δεῖται κολαστοῦ*. For the stress laid on 'good words' see notes on 296, 322.

1152. At a hint of obstinacy Oedipus again losing self-control, speaks as a tyrant to a slave.

1153. Oedipus has become more tyrannical since line 402. His conduct here reminds us of the tyrant Astyages in Hdt. 1 116. Having asked *κόθεν λάβοι τὸν παῖδα καὶ τίς εἴη ὁ παραδούς* (*cf.* 1162 ff.), and having received a false answer, Astyages said *οὐκ εὐβουλεύεσθαι (μὲν) ἐπιθυμέοντα ἐς ἀνάγκας μεγάλας ἀπικνέεσθαι, ἅμα τε λέγων ταῦτα ἐσήμαινε τοῖς δορυφόροισι λαμβάνειν αὐτόν. ὁ δὲ ἀγόμενος ἐς τὰς ἀνάγκας οὕτω δὴ ἔφαινε τὸν ἐόντα λόγον.*

1155. The use of *δύστηνος* in the sense of *δύστηνος ἐγώ* is, as Jebb remarks, in agreement with Sophocles' usage. But it would be hard to find a parallel for the nominative participle, referring to another person, which follows. The syntax of Sophocles is dramatic. The old man calls himself unhappy. But in his terror he uses a syntactical irregularity which for the audience puts the title of 'unhappy' upon Oedipus. See lines 855, 1071.

1162. The thought that he may prove the son of a slave still haunts the king. In 1166 I accept Schaefer's *ταὔτ'* for the MS reading *ταῦτ'*.

1168. The old man's answer leaves quite vague the question of parentage. Any member of Laïus' household, whether related to the king or not, might be described as the father of 'one of the children of the house of Laïus.' Oedipus, still dreading that he is of servile birth, hopes to be told that his father was *ἐγγενής*, and has no thought that Laïus himself may prove to be the father. Add to the parallels between Oedipus and the infant Cyrus of Herodotus (see lines 718, 719, 1153, 1174) the fact that the herdsman, when Harpagus gave him the child, at first thought *τῶν τινος οἰκετέων εἶναι* (Hdt. I 111).

1170. Still the fear that he may be proved a slave, not the fear of the actual truth, is haunting him.

1174. So Harpagus gave Cyrus to the herdsman for exposure *ἐς τὸ ἐρημότατον τῶν ὀρέων, ὅκως ἂν τάχιστα διαφθαρείη* (Hdt. I 110). See note on 719.

1175. *τλήμων* means not simply 'hard-hearted'—'the wretch,' as Jebb strongly phrases it—but also 'poor wretched woman!' The effect is human and tragic, and the application of the same epithet to Oedipus himself at 1194 heightens its value.

1177. Oedipus now knows the truth, but, for one great moment, resists it. With a fine effort of self-control he manages to ask a question which seems to test the truth of the old man's story. The simple answer, leaving no room for doubt, gives time for the change in the heroic spirit, which is expressed by the cry of line 1182.

1182. Our emotions have been prepared for this *ἐξήκοι*. See lines 87, 1084.

1186. For the general effect of such moralising compare Eur. *fr.* 332 'Consider the woes of others, and you will be better able to bear your own': especially *...τοὺς ἐκ μέγιστον ὀλβίας τυραννίδος | τὸ μηδὲν ὄντας.*

1197. The lucky shot which won complete happiness recalls the theme of *τύχη* (442) and also the theme of *κράτος*. The phrase *πάντ' εὐδαίμονος* is deliberately thrown into the form which recalls *Ζεῦ πάντ' ἀνάσσων* (904) and gives further value to *πάντα...κρατεῖν* in line 1522. The contrast which is thus suggested between mortals and the gods is driven home by the invocation of Zeus. We think of such commonplaces as the Homeric *οἵη περ φύλλων γενεή...* (*Il.* VI 147), as developed, *e.g.*, by Sophocles in *fr.* 535–6. *Cf.* Musaeus (Mullach Vol. I p. 161 l. 19 ff.) *ὡς δ' αὕτως καὶ φύλλα φύει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα· | ἄλλα μὲν ἐν μελίῃσιν ἀποφθίνει, ἄλλα δὲ φύει· | ὣς δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώπου γενέη καὶ φῦλλον ἐλίσσει.* The tragic fact is this: *πολλοῖς ὁ δαίμων οὐ κατ' εὔνοιαν φρενῶν, | μεγάλα δίδωσιν εὐτυχήματ'* (*cf.* 1081) *ἀλλ' ἵνα | τὰς ξυμφορὰς λάβωσιν ἐπιφανεστέρας* (*Fr. Tr. Adesp.* 82). And the moral, for mortals, is this: *εἰ δ' ἀξιοῖς σοι μηδὲν ἀλγεινόν ποτε | ...ἔσεσθαι, μακαρίως ἔχεις φρενῶν. | θεῶν γὰρ ἄξειν*

βίοτον, οὐ θνητῶν δοκεῖς (Dionysius *fr.* 2 N. p. 793). For πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποισιν, οὐχ ἡμῖν μόνον, | ἥ καὶ παραυτίκ' ἢ χρόνῳ δαίμων βίον | ἔσφηλε, κοὐδεὶς διὰ τέλους εὐδαιμονεῖ (Eur. *fr.* 273). In such moralising the blindness of man is a commonplace: we understand this play when we realise the feeling which produced, *e.g.*, ἄχθεα γῆς, εἴδωλα τετυγμένα, μηδαμὰ μηδὲν | εἰδότες, οὔτε κακοῖο προσερχομένοιο νοῆσαι | φράδμονες...ἀπρονόητοι (Orphica XXXII, Mullach Vol. 1 p. 181).

1200. This and the following lines recall 47 ff.

1213. It is a mistake to alter ἄκονθ' to ἄκων. See my Introduction p. xxx, and notice that other evils, ἔκοντα κοὐκ ἄκοντα are to follow (1230).

The allusion to 'All-seeing Time' recalls 614 (on which see my note), and is made more impressive by our memory of the tragic confidence of 1080 ff.

1221. τὸ δ' ὀρθὸν εἰπεῖν is the pathetic sequel to line 505 πρὶν ἴδοιμ' ὀρθὸν ἔπος. See the note there and on line 87.

1223. The honourable title by which the elders are addressed has tragic value. Oedipus, who τὰ μέγιστ' ἐτιμήθη, has fallen from his estate. The counsellors remain, ἀεὶ τιμώμενοι.

1230–1231. The death of Jocasta, and the self-blinding of Oedipus are ἔκοντα. This line is significant, and should prevent scholars from attributing to Sophocles a muddled notion that Oedipus is held responsible for the parricide and incest. Sophocles makes the moral distinction between the ἄκον and ἔκον as clearly as any modern moralist.

1231. An important maxim which gives its tragic value to Soph. *Trach.* 491. See my remarks in *Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.* 1915 Lent Term p. 3. The fundamental doctrine, against which Oedipus by blinding himself has sinned, is well expressed in [Pythag.] *Aur. Carm.* 17 (Mullach Vol. 1 p. 194) ὅσσα τε δαιμονίῃσι τύχαις βροτοὶ ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν | ἣν ἂν μοῖραν ἔχῃς, ταύτην φέρε, μηδ' ἀγανάκτει. The choice of the word φανῶσι gives the tragic application to the whole drama.

1251, 1260 and 1276. In each of these lines there is an irregularity which seems odd and artificial to the grammarian. But the effect on the hearer is in each case natural and expressive of the emotion of the speaker. In 1251 the voice drops before ἀπόλλυται. In 1260 the excitement makes a participle unnecessary: it is not true that we supply ὄντος. In 1276, whatever grammarians may think, no one who listens can fail to understand that it was the pins, not his eyes, that Oedipus raised.

1282. Those who have supposed that the final moralising is spurious have ignored the beauty of the recurrent theme. The chorus, having heard the truth of the old evils, sing of the emptiness of human happi-

ness. The slave who tells of the fresh evils, repeats their strain, now heightened by the greater tragedy. In the end, this theme forms the basis of a moral harmony.

1300. The tragic sequel of lines 263, 829.

1302. It is a mistake to avoid a quite legitimate metrical irregularity by reading δύστην'. There is here a good instance, not, I think, generally appreciated, of the subtlety with which Sophocles modifies his idiom for dramatic effect. The use of δύστηνος recalls 1155, on which see note. First Jocasta, then the old servant, unconsciously, now the chorus apply this title to the 'happy prince.' At line 1308 Oedipus takes the title, himself, as his own. But he does not say δύστηνος δῆτα, which would be the normal form of phrase for an answer and assent to the words of the chorus. His cry δύστηνος ἐγὼ is for him not an assent to the chorus but a spontaneous expression of feeling. For us, of course, it is a tragic assent.

1316–1320. The first lyrical lamentation of Oedipus is marked by sudden cries of physical pain. He feels the darkness and the agony of his wounds. The purpose of these lines is to prepare us for the quieter scene which is to follow. The moral is to prevail over the physical. It is the memory of sorrows, not the stab of the blind eyes, that matters most.

1321 ff. The first sign of the quieter mood is invested with a peculiar beauty. The voices of the chorus bring the realisation of the fact that human friendship survives. In his splendour Oedipus could not recognise his friend. That fact gives special value to 1324–1325. The sequel will be the scene with Creon.

1329. For the significance of this moment see Introduction, p. xxx.

1336. Lines 1321–1325 have established a bond of sympathy between the chorus and the hero. It is our sense of this deep affection that prevents us from misunderstanding the tone of the leader's assent to the tragic words of Oedipus. In small troubles most people attempt to comfort the sufferer by making light of his calamity. Here is a situation in which love itself can only agree that death would have been better than life for the sufferer.

1341. If the reading is right ὀλέθριον means 'lost' as Jebb says. But here, as often in Sophocles, the normal meaning is felt beneath the abnormal. Oedipus brought calamity not only to himself but to Jocasta and to Thebes.

1347. I agree with Jebb that τοῦ νοῦ means 'thy sense of thy misfortune.' This makes me inclined to keep ἀναγνῶναι, and to suppose that the chorus means, not 'I wish I had never known you' as in line 1356, but 'would that you had not lived to recognise your destiny.'

It is possible, however, that τοῦ νοῦ refers to the voluntary act of self-blinding and ξυμφορᾶς to the unavoidable disasters. We remember, in that case, the principle stated by Democritus (Diels 42 p. 399), μέγα τὸ ἐν ξυμφορῇσι φρονεῖν ἃ δεῖ, which is certainly important for the understanding of these final scenes.

1369. The change to iambics marks a change in the mood of Oedipus. The reasoned defence of his act of self-mutilation serves not only to mark the transition to the calmer atmosphere of the Creon scene, but also to introduce the *motif* of the love for his children (1375 ff.), which lends comforting beauty to the final development of the composition. From time to time the pain of Oedipus breaks out afresh, but it is now no longer the physical agony, but the μνήμη κακῶν which is felt. See note on 1316 ff.

1390. In the very act of explaining his self-blinding, Oedipus makes clear to himself the truth that blindness of the body cannot help the agony of mind.

1409. After a long pause the king speaks quietly again. The last phase of this long rhesis derives much of its value from our memory of the earlier scenes in which suppliants have come to Oedipus. Notice ἴτ' in 1413 and compare 46–47. Again this scene with the chorus beautifully foreshadows the scene with Creon.

1421. κακός. This is no casual writing. The word which Oedipus now uses of himself is the word which he has so violently applied to his friend. See note on 76 and *cf.* 334, 548, 627.

1424 ff. These lines are not unsympathetic, but expressive of a profound religious feeling. Oedipus is polluted and a pollution to others.

1433. The superlative κάκιστον heightens the effect which I have pointed out in my note on 1421.

1436–1444. Again it is a mistake to suppose that Creon is unsympathetic. The effect on Oedipus is obviously quite inconsistent with such an interpretation. Line 1444 indeed recalls line 1023.

1494. I retain and translate the MS reading. Jebb accepts Kennedy's ταῖς ἐμαῖς γοναῖσιν.

1513. That the right reading is οἳ καιρὸς ἀεὶ ζῇν, βίου (Hartung, MSS τοῦ βίου) I hope that my whole commentary has proved. Here, as often, καιρός means not 'opportunity,' but the due 'measure.' This old use is often missed. In Hes. *Op.* 694 we have μέτρα φυλάσσεσθαι, καιρὸς δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστος, applied to the practical problem of the loading of a ship or a waggon. Headlam showed how Aeschylus developed these ideas as metaphor. Paley was wrong in his ingenious attempt to find a reference to 'season' in the Hesiodic passage. When Pindar says (*Ol.* XIII 47) ἕπεται δ' ἐν ἑκάστῳ μέτρον· νοῆσαι δὲ καιρὸς

ἄριστος, I venture, in spite of Gildersleeve, to think that καιρός simply = μέτρον. When Bacchylides says παύροισι δὲ θνατῶν τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον δαίμων ἔδωκεν | πράσσοντας ἐν καιρῷ πολιοκρόταφον | γῆρας ἱκνεῖσθαι, πρὶν ἐγκύρσαι δύᾳ, he does not mean 'Few men are perfectly happy all the days of their life' (Jebb *fr.* 21 'faring opportunely, *i.e.*, as they would wish at each successive step in life'), but 'few have the happy life of moderate prosperity,' ἀπήμαντον ὥστ' ἀπαρκεῖν (Aesch. *Ag.* 378). *Cf.* [Pythag.] *Aur. Carm.* 34 (Mullach Vol. I p. 195) μέτρον δὲ λέγω τόδ' ὃ μή σ' ἀνιήσει. Clement (*Strom.* VI 745) knew that well enough when he foolishly accused Euripides of plagiarising from this phrase of Bacchylides for his own κεῖνος δ' ἁπάντων ἐστὶ μακαριώτατος | ὃς διὰ τέλους ζῶν ὁμαλὸν ἤσκησεν βίον. Add the use of καιρῷ καταβαίνων in Pindar *Paean* II 34, μέτρῳ καταβαίνειν *Pyth.* VIII 78, Eur. *fr.* 893. So in [Pythag.] *Aur. Carm.* 37 (Mullach Vol. I p. 195) μὴ δαπανᾶν παρὰ καιρὸν...μηδ' ἀνελεύθερος ἴσθι· μέτρον δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστον.

For the contrast between tyranny and ὁ καιρός *cf.* Eur. *fr.* 626. Democritus (Diels 191 p. 420) has a good sermon on the text of 'cheerful content and the modest mean': the really 'lucky' man (εὐτυχής) is he who is cheerful, ὁ ἐπὶ μετρίοισι χρήμασι εὐθυμούμενος (Diels 286 p. 437): men ought to recognise that human life is ἀφαυρὴν...καὶ ὀλιγοχρόνιον, πολλῇσί τε κηρσὶ συμπεφυρμένην καὶ ἀμηχανίῃσι, ὅκως ἄν τις μετρίης τε κτήσιος ἐπιμέληται καὶ ἀμέτρητα [?] ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀναγκαίοισι ταλαιπωρέῃ (Diels 286 p. 436). Democritus also uses the word καιρός as a synonym for μέτρον (Diels 235 p. 427).

1516. For the phrase *cf.* Anth. App. IV 22, 2 μηδὲν ἄγαν· καιρῷ πάντα πρόσεστι καλά. For the thought *cf.* Eur. *fr.* 46 μετρίως ἀλγεῖν, 274, 418. The 'modest measure,' which is the prayer he has taught his children, Oedipus himself must learn, first by refraining from excess of lamentation, secondly by awaiting the decision of Delphi as to his future, thirdly by obedience, even when his children are led away.

1517–1522. The value of these lines depends on our recollection of the scene with Teiresias, where human wisdom was pitted against the wisdom of a divinely inspired prophet, and of the scene with Creon himself, in which Oedipus made his claim πάντα κρατεῖν. For πάντα κρατεῖν *cf.* the dialogue of Cleanthes (Mullach Vol. I p. 152) where Θυμός says: ἔχω, Λογισμέ, πᾶν ὃ βούλομαι ποιεῖν, and Λογισμός answers :<καὶ>βασιλικόν γε. I need hardly say that Θυμός and Λογισμός have played their parts in our drama.

1528. For the prevalence of this maxim see Schol. on Eur. *Andr.* 100 where an epic fragment is cited, Eur. *Heracleid.* 863, *Fr. Tr. Adesp.* N. p. xxi 9, Soph. *fr.* 588. See also Dionysius *fr.* 3, N. p. 794. One of the noblest applications is made by Pericles in the Funeral Oration (Thuc. II 44):

the parents will make no lament, *ἐν πολυτρόποις γὰρ ξυμφοραῖς ἐπίστανται τραφέντες, τὸ δὲ εὐτυχὲς οἳ ἂν τῆς εὐπρεπεστάτης λάχωσιν, ὥσπερ οἵδε νῦν, τελευτῆς, ὑμεῖς δὲ λύπης, καὶ οἷς εὐδαιμονῆσαί τε ὁ βίος ὁμοίως καὶ ἐντελευτῆσαι ξυνεμετρήθη.* We may remember also the beautiful lines in which Phrynichus (**Μοῦσαι**, Koch Vol. 1 p. 379 *fr.* 31) referred to the death of Sophocles:

μάκαρ Σοφοκλέης, ὃς πολὺν χρόνον βιοὺς
ἀπέθανεν εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ καὶ δεξιός·
πολλὰς ποιήσας καὶ καλὰς τραγῳδίας
καλῶς ἐτελεύτησ' οὐδὲν ὑπομείνας κακόν.

APPENDIX

THE LATER COMMONPLACE OF KING AND TYRANT

In my commentary I have rarely referred to the late Graeco-Roman development of the tyrant type, because I desired to avoid the suspicion that I was importing into the interpretation of Sophocles the ideas of a later age. It may be interesting, however, to some of my readers, if I collect in an appendix a few specimens from the great mass of later commonplace. The ideas which were already current in the fifth century before Christ have become stereotyped and are applied by writers of courtly panegyric without discrimination to all emperors, good and bad.

Take first the general contrast between the King and the Tyrant. 'It is impossible,' says Themistius (I p. 19 a), 'to feel the same admiration for the intemperate as for the man of prudent moderation, for the passionate lover of gain as for the just, for the harsh and violent as for the man of gentle temper.' True Royalty 'rules with virtue, for the good of men, that is, of the governed': tyranny rules 'with vice, for nothing but its own enjoyment' (II p. 35 d). 'I will be your instructor' says this flatterer to the young Valentinian (IX p. 123 d) 'even as Phoenix was to the young Achilles: and thus you shall come to know what things you should say, and of what things you should be silent; what things it is good to do, and what it is more profitable not to do; when you should waken your wrath, and when you should lay it to sleep; what is the difference between an unlucky chance, an unjust deed, and a mistake; and that it is one thing to rule over free men, another thing to rule over servants: that the one is the supremacy of virtue, the other is the snatching of a gain from Luck.' The good King (I 5 a) 'is as far removed from desire for gain as he is from harshness,' and he fights against the usurping tyrant 'not for the sake of gain, nor to purchase undying fame, but because he loves that which is good in itself and would free the world.' Again, we recognise the traits of Oedipus, when Dio, who is insisting that literature ought to incite great Kings not only to warlike achievement, but also to 'peace and good-will and the honouring of the gods and the care of men,' tells us that Timotheos ought to have been able to do good to Alexander (Dio I p. 2) 'whenever he passed the due measure in expression of grief, or punished more sharply than was lawful or fair, or was harsh and angry against his own friends and comrades, or looked down upon his true and mortal parents.' And the fault of Alexander was the fault of Oedipus:—

he did not know himself. 'What enemy,' he asked, 'shall I still have to fight after I have conquered the world?' (Dio IV 68) 'One,' answered Diogenes, 'that you think you know better than all the world, yet one that you do not know.' 'Tell me who it is,' cried the King, and the answer was, 'I have long been telling you, but you will not listen. You are your own greatest enemy...for no one that is base and foolish knows himself.'

But it is not only in the general conception that the late convention illustrates our theme. In detail after detail we shall find that Oedipus is such a man as Themistius, Dio and Julian would recognise as typical of kingship, both in its nobler aspect and in its tendency to degenerate to tyranny. The King, like Oedipus, is father of his people. The phrase, we know, is Homeric. Herodotus remembers it when he tells us that Dareius was called the 'merchant,' Cambyses the 'master,' but Cyrus the 'father' of the people (Hdt. III 19). When you turn to Themistius (I 17 a), you will find that old theme duly elaborated. Cambyses was both harsh and careless of his responsibility: Cyrus was gentle (ἤπιος, the Homeric word) and devised all manner of good for his people. Again in Julian (I 9 a, 44 b), all this is assumed as commonplace. That brings us to a further point. The King is wakeful, since he is ever thinking of his people's needs: the tyrant is kept awake by fear. So Oedipus in the watches of the night broods on his city's trouble and seeks the remedy. All that is reminiscent of Homer's Agamemnon, and you will find it all again elaborated in Themistius (VII 91 a, XV 187 a, 195 b), in Dio (III 51), and in Plutarch (*Mor.* 815 d). Yet again the people look to the King's wise aid because the King has experience:

> The tried man's thought,
> And his alone, springs to the live event.

Consult Julian (I p. 12 d) and you will understand what Sophocles is doing. Odysseus, like the Roman Emperors, needed 'experience of many men and cities,' though he was not called, like Roman Emperors, to rule great territories and many nations. This also is a commonplace. The helmsman of the state needs virtue (Themistius XV 196 d) and virtue is nourished not merely by office, but by practice: the man 'who holds the reins of cities and of peoples needs more experience than his subjects need' (*ib.* 197 b).

The tendency to sudden anger, and the tendency to allow his passion to outstrip his reason, are not merely characteristic of Oedipus as a man but symptoms of the defect of his good royalty. That the good King has a 'peaceful eye' (Themistius I 6 d) is commonplace. See how Themistius speaks of wrathful Agamemnon 'with his flashing eyes' (VIII 111 c), depicted thus by the poet 'not because Homer wished to

attack Agamemnon, the divinely ordained King, but to show the danger of anger, which, in his case, nearly ruined all.' Pursue the point, and you will find many parallels to our play. The King is most admirable because he does not let his passion win advantage over his judgment (I 7 c): and 'though his place gives him licence to do all things in anger, he is more gentle than the son of Ariston' (II 30 c). His anger he salves with reason, and submits himself to the treatment of the physician Time (VII 98 c). This principle is applied to punishment, which must be neither excessive, nor imposed without due consideration. In general, 'like Pittacus,' a true King puts 'forgiveness before requital' (Julian II 50 c). He does not make anger the judge, nor measure his requital by the measure of his wrath, but applies reason as the check to passion, and shows himself milder than the laws (Themistius VII 93 b). On the contrary, a Tyrant acts suddenly (Plutarch *Mor.* 782 c): 'His vice, because his place allows it a free course, turns anger into execution and death, lust into adultery, desire of gain into confiscation: the word no sooner spoken than the offender is undone: one hint of suspicion, and the falsely accused is dead!' When Lucian's Phalaris is trying to prove that he has been a good King (II p. 106), this is his plea: 'I put back the accused, I allowed them to plead their cause, I brought forward the evidence, I clearly investigated every point, and then at last, when they themselves no longer denied their guilt, I punished.'

Surely all this throws light on the relations of Oedipus and Creon? But I think we can get even closer to the poet's conception here. Oedipus shared his authority with Creon. That was characteristic of his wise and temperate rule. The Tyrant will not share, but wishes 'in all things to be the master.' See, for this topic, Themistius (VI passim), and notice that the Homeric precedent is duly cited. 'You have in your own household your Phoenix' (p. 81 c), 'in your own household one to instruct you as to all that may be done and may be said.' An elaborate treatment of the same theme will be found in Julian (I 17 b ff.). The King's brothers are his fellow-rulers, whom he serves: to his friends he gives lavishly a share in free speech and in equal speech, as in all good things: he shares with all men his possessions: and (on p. 19 d) we hear, in words that remind us of Creon's wise admonitions, that such sharing is 'not unprofitable' since nothing is truly profitable that is not also good.

Once more we are reminded of Oedipus when we consider the suspicions of the Tyrant. A good King loves his subjects and is loved by them. A Tyrant fears as he is feared. A King's best bodyguard is his subjects' love, and his chief fear is lest his subjects suffer injury. And the subjects 'do not fear him, but fear for him' (Themistius II 36 a). So the subject prays (VI 80 d) 'not to fear the sovereign, but to fear for him'

and prays that the Kingship may find its bodyguard in such sort of fear from all subjects. For the King's generous fear for his subjects see Plutarch *Mor.* 781 c, where the theme is enlivened with some excellent anecdotes concerning the shifts to which the terrified Tyrants are put. The good King realises that no wealth of gold and silver and precious jewels is so profitable as the wealth of true friendship (Themistius I 17 c) and that the good-will of his people is his surest safeguard (Julian I 48 a, Dio III 51). Therefore he values, and is kept in safety by, the candid frankness of the friends whom he knows so well how to distinguish from the flatterers. His palace is guarded (Themistius V 67 b) by the 'good counsel of a Nestor, the frank speech of a Diomed, by men like the Chrysantas of Cyrus or the Artabanos of Xerxes.' Again we remember Creon, and again we notice that the commonplace is illustrated by most ancient precedent. So is the complementary thesis that the Tyrant hates the virtuous and has no true friends (Julian I 43 d, Dio III 55, VI 97). The 'ground-tone,' says Gomperz, of all the stock characterisation of the Tyrant is the theory that he 'lives in fear.' He fears, says Dio (VI 96), 'what is afar, because it is far off, and what is near because it is so close to his person: he suspects the threat of war from those who are at a distance, and from men near at hand he looks for a plot. Tyrants think all things are full of plots and ambushes. Each of them counts over to himself the stories of the deaths of kings and all the conspiracies that have ever been in the world.' Oedipus, who cried out so bitterly against the hate and envy that Kingship meets in the world, is presently defending his injustice to Creon by the plea of every Tyrant that his own safety requires vigilance. Well, when Lucian's Phalaris explains that Tyrants needs must punish and must cause themselves to be feared, he puts it on the ground (II p. 107) that, since their rule is a rule of force, they are surrounded by men who hate them and conspire against them. This same excellent Phalaris, before he came to be a Tyrant, was actually on the brink of laying down his legitimate authority because, as he says, *τὸ ἄρχειν....σὺν φθόνῳ καματηρόν* (II 105). But, of course, when all is said, the King's best bodyguard is wisdom (Themistius I 5 b), and the most dangerous plotters against him are his own unruly passions (Themistius III 45 b).

Nor is it only in relation to Creon that Oedipus is subject to the peculiar dangers and temptations that belong to Kingship. We have seen how he passes from an overweening confidence in his good Luck to the calamity which makes him for all men a warning of the uncertainty of human fortune and the need for Sophrosyne. Even so should all Kings find their supremacy in Virtue and in Wisdom, not in their high Fortune (Themistius V 67 a), whereas the usurping Tyrant 'has enough good Luck

to make him, in his confidence, reveal his evil nature and his craft'—then, 'having enjoyed just so much authority as will bring his character to light,' he is 'snatched away even in the moment of discovery' (Themistius VII 92 d). We remember the close of the tragedy when we hear Julian's ill-deserved congratulations (145 d) to an Emperor 'not puffed up by good Luck, as was Alexander, who despised his own parents and claimed to be the son of Ammon': 'to win a little moment of good Luck, and to prosper for the moment—that is easy: but to preserve through life the good that is given is not so light a task' (47 b). When Alexander captured his wounded enemy Porus and asked, 'How shall I deal with you?' the helpless man replied, 'Deal with me as a King should deal'—for this, as Alexander himself realised, included all: it meant 'sustaining with humanity and modesty and gentleness and kindliness the present good fortune, remembering in the spirit that provokes not heaven's jealousy how unstable is the poise of the scales of Luck.'

We have seen again, how Oedipus, for his benefaction to the State, is honoured as 'Saviour,' almost as a god. And we have noticed how this theme has been developed in the tragic sequel by the contrast of the earthly King with Zeus, and by the final delusion of the chorus which hails the hero as the son of a god. The basis of all this, we recognise, is given by the Homeric notion of the Zeus-born King, honoured 'like a god' among his people, and by the doctrine of Sophrosyne, as preached, for instance, by Pindar, which warns a King that, although he has reached the highest pitch of mortal happiness, he may not climb 'the brazen heaven.' For all that development see Themistius XV 193 c. The commonplace receives fresh value when Plato, insisting on the ruler's need for virtue and philosophy, proceeds to say that philosophy is a 'becoming as like as possible to the divine.' Thus changed and enriched, the theme is common in Themistius (I 8 d, 9 a, II 32 d, V 64 c, IX 126 c, XV 188 ff.).

By imitation of the gods, not by exacting worship from men, the King acquires the right to bear the titles of the gods. But how, exactly, shall he imitate the gods? By learning as Oedipus, according to our interpretation of the tragic exit, learns Sophrosyne: 'If any man is to deserve the titles Saviour, Counsellor, Defender of the City, the very titles of Zeus, he must win the Sophrosyne and the Philosophia of Zeus' (IX 126 c).

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